The Angel and the Storm

"Material Spirit" in the Era of Climate Change

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> The world has more than one age. We lack the measure of the measure. We no longer realize the wear, we no longer take account of it as a single page in the progress of history. Neither maturation, nor crisis, nor even agony. Something else. What is happening is happening to age itself, it strikes a blow at the teleological order of history. What is coming, in which the untimely appears, is happening to time but does not happen in time.
>
> **—Derrida, *Specters of Marx***

It is *bad timing* for the global economic system to enter a self-feeding black hole—at least from the perspective of "climate change." The economic implosions of the credit collapse have, essentially, foreclosed any geopolitical will to address the gathering indicators of ecocatastrophic logics, had that ever been plausible. The interplay between the economic and ecological, the "eco-eco" disaster, tends to occlude the exponential curves of issues that lie outside the screen—collapsing marine life, mass extinction events, "peak" everything (oil, humans, water . . .), projections of "population culling," and so on. The Ponzi scheme of hypermodernity extending the depletion of reserves, the burn-off of futures regarded as disposable capital, sometimes parallels that of critical theory agendas today—caught in the recirculation of twentieth-century masters who did not address or anticipate ecocatastrophics generally. There is a curious structure to any "present" passed various tipping points that alter eons going forward and anticipate mass extinction events and disappearing futures. Into said "futures" megadebt is dumped, reserves and generations despoiled (water, oil, biodiversity). Such is the disaster porn mantras we are routinely fed, and

routinely turn into mass entertainment vehicles to normatize. It is amusing to recall the neoliberal premise that a global "free market" heralded in the nineties. The collapse of credit mirrors, in the critical discourses of today, one of credibility in the referential models and contaminated agendas that partook of this parenthesis, which has now crystallized with the term *anthropocene,* a geologically marked era of humans, implicitly catalogued as if after the fact. These mutations of the biosphere seem never to have been quite anticipated in twentieth-century theory or critical culture (which deployed the term "materiality" liberally and insistently).

With tipping points passed, a collective *we* appears as if on the inside of a *time bubble*—at once too late, and yet not yet fully arrived. What does the phrase "material spirit" signify in what might be called the late anthropocene? What, even, would "materialistic spirit" signify before *other materialities* (the biosphere, energy, biomutation, weather), or from a position in which zombie logics and labels proliferate (zombie banks, zombie democracy, zombie politics, and so on) for which no traditional "enemy" declares itself to form resistance before? The dilemma of the Occupy movement emerges here, say, within a totalization or capture of various systems—global banker hegemony, postdemocratic mediacracies. One can be excused for asking this question, still, of a twentieth-century text if not icon for this problem, if in order to index where we stand in relation to it today. Benjamin's pop trope of an Angel of History in his "Theses" is one such text. Derrida's *Specters of Marx* is another, particularly as it appropriates the former to propose a spectrology—a recasting of both materiality and spirit in their way one more time. What one finds is not only that Derrida's "democracy to come" and use of weak messianism regresses from Benjamin's text, but that it gets rhetorically caught in the angel's dilemma.

What interests me here is not how this twentieth-century "angel" adapts to an era of climate change. One is alert to the fact that Benjamin's fable of the angel is dominated by the figure of the "storm," a force beyond sovereignty. This text has been read in the past to support one or another form of *angelicism*—at first the Marxist angel and the Kaballist angel, then a deconstructive angel. To read Benjamin under the auspices of an era of climate change is to ask if there has not been a misreading of this angel all along.

1

Bruno Latour uses the specter of ecocatastrophe as the definitive closure of what he calls a "Modernist parenthesis" in an essay diverted through

the film *Avatar* read through Gaia theory. He means by this a preoccupation with sorting out local histories, *anteriority* as such, cultural memory, catastrophes past, and so on—as if never turning to what arrives ahead, and he necessarily forms a specular relation to the "parenthesis" he wants to close. (It has always been a "modernist" gesture to dream the closure of itself, a zero-degree departure—here forced from without differently with the prospect of extinction appearing before unmodifiable limits.) In the face of this he proposes to close out the figure of the future, as well, as a misleading construct, together with the dedication to back-turning legacies that defined the "modernist" enclosure. Even so, he finds his way back to the "tired" trope of Benjamin's angel to make his point, even though he has no wish to go there (or "embrace" it):

> I want to argue that there might have been some misunderstanding, during the Modernist parenthesis, about the very direction of the flow of time. I have this strange fantasy that the modernist hero never actually looked toward the future but always to the past, the archaic past that he was fleeing in terror. . . . I don't wish to embrace Walter Benjamin's tired "Angel of History" trope, but there is something right in the position he attributed to the angel: it looks backward and not ahead. "Where we see the appearance of a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and hurls it before his feet." But contrary to Benjamin's interpretation, the Modern who, like the angel, is flying backward is actually not seeing the destruction; He is generating it in his flight since it occurs behind His back! It is only recently, by a sudden conversion, a metanoia of sorts, that He has suddenly realized how much catastrophe His development has left behind him. The ecological crisis is nothing but the sudden turning around of someone who had actually never before looked into the future, so busy was He extricating Himself from a horrible past. There is something Oedipal in this hero fleeing His past so fiercely that He cannot realize—except too late—that it is precisely His flight that has created the destruction He was trying to avoid in the first place.[1]

Latour's turn is provocative, but might want to take account that the moment of a cognitive turn into the future—or, absent that, what he calls man's "prospects," a Standard & Poor's downgrade—coincides with not being able to address it either. Yet it is instructive, since it displaces the manner in which the "tired 'Angel of History' trope" has been most often rendered, that is, as a figure of pathos and as a hero within Benjamin's weaponized bestiary of terms and figures. Robert Lehman attributes to

him what is called an allegorical function, as the one who sees the "dead letters" of history and is resoundingly materialist: "Benjamin's *Angelus* sees the dead letters out of which every epic history is written, the linguistic *corps morcelé* that remains when the time that imbues (written) history with life has been (allegorically) subtracted; he is, in this sense, the perfect materialist historian."[2] In a related vein, Beatrice Hansen, in her important work on Benjamin's "other history,"[3] reads the angel as Benjamin's counter-Zarathustran agent, indexed not to an *Übermensch* but to a "creaturely," nonhuman and inorganic zone, finally. Yet the angel's profile changes as we rotate into the twenty-first century. The entire text seems to alter its sense when we see that, rather than being a hero, the angel as Benjamin cites him is a mute *pantalone,* a dissimulating façade less endowed with translational powers than an autoexterminating angel—to the extent the trope of the angel is not self-evidently that. One hears the term angel differently from the position of the theologically hemmed masses looking toward his face, the unawakened dead of debris, or from the "storm" coming from the future, not to mention citing, already, Klee.

2

Benjamin mobilizes what is called a "materialis*tic* historiography"—that is, not *materialist* in its Marxian appearance. The practice points at once toward anteriority, memory programs (such as historicism), and modes of inscription ("materialistic historio*graphy*"). Benjamin's "Theses" is read not only as the precursor of *Specters of Marx* but of the latter's attempt to read "materiality," and perhaps spirit itself, as a matter of technics, *spectragenics,* and preoriginary inscriptions. What Derrida omits is a logic in Benjamin that turns a different way, that appeals not to the socius but to the biomorphic horizon of terrestrial or "organic" life indifferent to human time. This omission—the lack of any reference in his "ten plagues" of the new world order to any form of ecocatastrophic logics under way—retracts selectively Benjamin's less bounded implications. How does a *mnemonic politics* (a "politics of memory") reorient today toward *other materialities* that are subject neither to trope nor to conceptualization, anarchival, for which there is no cultural memory or inscriptions to reference?

A riddle emerges. Benjamin's Angel of History seems not only to ruin *history* himself by just being there (Latour's thesis) but to ruin the project of the "Theses." He cannot stop destroying, including and beyond himself. Having been called not only to redeem the hordes of undead beseechers (or readers, essentially), he knows it is a scam responsible for the acceleration of their undoing—angelicism itself being the signature of a theotropic

reflex, a perpetual organicism and desire to make whole. He "wants to" play his role, we are told, but is whooshed away by a storm from the future. Despite the text's *Sturm und Drang,* or because of it, we may not see how foppish the angel is to Benjamin's eye: impotent, his audience of ruined souls is expectant, demanding to be made whole—they have a reading of him he cannot sustain; without divine or any backing, his costume's main accoutrement, wings, is his undoing, pinned by the storm; and then, put into a dissimulating relation to his audience, whom he would have wanted to satisfy but cannot, he *bolts.* That is, due to the dual prism of the conceptual traditions Benjamin is not merging, as readers look for, but taking down—theological-spiritual, Marxist-theological materialism, out of which Phoenix something called *materialistic historiography* would rise—we may not note that the figure is not ennobled or tragic but, in advance, stripped. It already cites or tropes Klee's own wire-grid, "new," incandescent graphic.

Yet the "angel of history" puts the project of a *materialistic historiography* in advance into question. At stake is a *torsion* between the "materialistic historiographer" that Benjamin conjures as the hyperbolic agent of historial intervention and what he reads in or into Klee's angel. This new and last *angel of anthropomorphism* falls away before what is called a storm, before the other materialities we will associate here with "climate change." Klee's angel must be costumed up one last time, given wings, and pushed out before the curtain to play his role, but he barely wants to, knowing what he does. There the wreckage of the past looks toward him to make things whole and precisely misreads what he signifies. There is a sort of reading trap that he enters, one formed by the expectation of readers, say, looking for the Marxian angel, or the Jewish angel, or the deconstructive angel—before he will be swept away, unable to address or resolve it. What is more interesting is that the angel's depiction undermines in advance the task of the *MH* (*materialistic historiographer*), squares off against it, making the "Theses" a suiciding text as its condition (only incidentally followed by Benjamin's own). I will divert this war zone within Benjamin's text to ask where Derrida appears not only to repeat this instability but to rhetorically regress from it, say, in his attempt to simulate for his readers "the political," or maintain that the house is an economy of mere ghosts.

3

Benjamin's *angel of history* stands looking back at the wreckage of the past. He wants to intervene in some way, to give a theotropic or Marxian interpretation that would answer the expectations of the multitude looking

to him and make "whole" again the dead, but is interrupted. Rather, he is overwhelmed by what is called a "storm" that catches his wings. The use of this word is signal. And it opens the text to the climatic horizons and other materialities at work today. And he abandons his post:

> This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and whirls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.[4]

This new angel loses his balance, the storm "caught in his wings with such violence that he can no longer close them." But the word "storm" is more significant than the word "progress," recurring three times as the subject of a sentence, compared to which "progress," supposed to be a punch line, is merely "what we call" that. Among else, the passage opens a purchase on weather, geological force, climatics.

This new angel poses a question by having no power at all. For one thing, he dissimulates. Eyes are on him, and the projected reading of him that is desired is something he'd "like" to supply but cannot. In fact, he's out of there. He appears unable to speak and unable to abandon the past that is a "single catastrophe" ("the pile of debris that grows skyward"). The trope of *debris,* repeated, underscores a field of waste and garbage separate from but linked to acculation. He "wants to" stay at his post and "make whole" this wreckage but he cannot, and not only because a greater violence draws him away. He might seem momentarily a sort of *materialist angel* as he is torn toward a future from behind, dissolved from his role and function. He was there to serve humans, *he looks human.* The angel of history should not have to be concerned by a progressive future. History as a figure here flips direction from tending the archive, narrative, and *anteriority,* where the "materialistic historiographer" of Benjamin's "Theses" plies his trade (a sort of Marx-inflected Zarathustra), to something else. But the new angel, who is also the last, must turn from even that.[5]

Why does the angel part company with the *MH,* though, by abandoning anteriority as a catastrophic heap? Or rather, why does Benjamin's "Theses," set to articulate the performative premises of the MH, turn against itself and create an angel of history that is first mocked (as if an "angel" of historicism) and then seems to interrupt the MH's orientation toward

anteriority because of a *storm*? One answer to the question—that is, what separates the angel of history from the materiality of inscriptions?—appears in the later section 18 of the "Theses," which appeals to the nonanthropomorphic order of biological and terrestrial "time":

> "In relation to the history of organic life on earth," writes a modern biologist, "the paltry fifty millennia of *homo sapiens* constitutes something like two seconds at the close of a twenty-four-hour day. On this scale, the history of civilized mankind would fill one-fifth of the last second of the last hour." The present, which, as a model of Messianic time, comprises the entire history of mankind in an enormous abridgment, coincides exactly with the stature which the history of mankind has in the universe. (263)

The "time" one invokes here is a different and wild time-space, the utterly indifferent nonanthropic expansion of terrestrial mutation through inorganic and organic forms, and before. The perspective could be called that of a prehistorial trace, and accords discretely with the way Benjamin uses "prehistorical" elsewhere as an always contemporary logic that can surface (in Kafka, for instance). The latter bursts the nanometrics of a human present.

The angel's gaze is compromised by the weather, or *temps.* This *storm* within time pushes aside his programmed desire—theotropic or Marxist—to make the catastrophe of human history somehow "whole." It sweeps him into a future acceleration that should not be his provenance. But his wings are pinned. The image bears the logics of a rape. This interface as if between a caesura within the artefacted structure of memory and the natural mutations of an earth brackets what would today be called the "anthropocene era" (as if with a backward glance at it). It is drawn instead toward a certain explosive contraction or outside oblivious to the *anthropocene* parenthesis, its exponential accelerations, its wars, its "progress." Its disappearance. The *temps* of temporalizations and climatics intertwine, a *tempest* in Shakespeare's usage. Earth had ever been positioned between contesting temporal forces—geological shifts, meteoric impacts, microbial irruption, abrupt extinctions, new niche species. In the *anthropocene* era, as it is now named, earth witnesses the sixth mass extinction event—yet the first accomplished by a biological form, a linguistically endowed organism.

4

So the *angel of history* is disarticulated by a storm of logics that precede cultural memory altogether. He dissolves into the force of a terrestrial mu-

tation that turns its face from the rising debris of human history. It is no longer about the crowds of beseechers, the unawakened dead wanting redemptive meaning, nor about some "otherness of the other" ethically reconstituted. It isn't about the home or man so defined. The more the latter is centralized, in fact, the more the suicidal spiral accelerates. The autoexterminating angel does two things that the MH cannot. *It* requires other metrics of time or even "presents" than either the notion of presence or its antipode, the caesura of the nonpresent, provides.[6]

Late in *Specters of Marx,* Derrida puts on display a running if cryptic subtext he had been in dialogue with, or wished to appropriate. It emerges when various formulations, like that of a "democracy to come," nonexistent and never to arrive, appeal to Benjamin's figure of *weak messianism*—a messianism without the messianic which retains, nonetheless, the structure of the "promise." In late Derrida this devolves to various double gestures that appear to mobilize this affirming *promise without promise* as a rhetorical glue: the labyrinth of hospitality (never abandoning its envelope inversions, appealing to an "absolute" variant), the rhetorical appropriation of the term "justice" (assimilated to deconstruction), the entourage of a "democracy to come" (at the moment an era of democracy palpably closed), the hyperbolic deployments of the Lévinasian "other" and conjurations of mourning—moves susceptible to deconstruction by an early Derrida, on which he perhaps counted. Why does Derrida not just let the "messianic" go altogether? Why pull back from, say, the reading of de Man that, in Benjamin, there is nothing messianic whatsoever at work—not just one without religion, using the *X without X* formula Derrida had come, "perhaps," to phone in too routinely? Derrida's redeployment of "weak messianism" is generous, negatively framed, but one cannot reinitialize the phrase without an uncontrolled literalization. Entering "this war of messianic eschatologies,"[7] one wishes "to open up access to an affirmative thinking of the messianic and emancipatory promise as promise" (75). In "this desert-like messianism (without content and without identifiable messiah), of this also abyssal desert, 'desert in the desert'" (28), we hear that itself, "perhaps, a certain experience of the emancipatory promise, it is perhaps even the formality of a structural messianism, a messianism without religion" (59). Any *perhaps* includes a perhaps not. Nonetheless, one totalizes this possibility since it keeps the future, supposedly monstrous and incalculable, open: "Was not Abrahamic messianism but an exemplary prefiguration, the pre-name [*prenom*]" (167), and one does so in order to ask, "Can one conceive an atheological heritage of the messianic?" (168). What, however, if Derrida finds himself caught—in any case, before the dawning era of climate change—in the position of Benjamin's angel as he

is undone by a "storm"? Moreover, what if any calculation of "the debt" and its relation to mourning did not anticipate derivatives, high-frequency trading algorithms, sovereign default? Thus Derrida would turn to the problem of terrorism following 9/11, the import of the strike and America's suicidal autoimmune recoil (since played out, effectively handing Osama a win), but would again, as in *Specters*' "ten plagues," occlude or ignore the horizons of twenty-first-century climate change and ecocatastrophic accelerations.

5

The "Theses" come into contact with *Specters of Marx,* then, at two points: where Derrida's transposition of Marxian *materiality* into spectragenics pointedly echoes that of the "materialistic historiographer" and where his use of *weak messianism* appropriates, or misappropriates, the text directly (Derrida links the phrase to a nonexistent "democracy to come"). The new angel of history does not carry a message, does not witness, is not able to redeem. He is himself, a sign without a sender, interrupted. Ever facing the past, as the debris and wreckage of human events pile up at his feet, he is simply blown away by what is repeatedly called a storm from the future.

If the angel is linked, etymologically, to a messenger and message itself, a figure of media, he comes to supplant any individual content or message, like Gabriel coming to signify "annunciation." Or, say, an emptied form of promise. Yet the faces of the multitude of the dead turn toward him, look at his humanized face, expecting an answer or affirmation that will make whole the wreckage, redeem its debris. This Potemkin angel is also the prototype for the bewildered destruction of a self-anthropomorphized "subject," the *artifice of a subjectivity* at all, Latour's man in the "Modernist parenthesis," likened by him to Oedipus. He is trapped between a performance that is demanded of him and what is pinning his wings—he is trapped by an expectation of a promise contradicted by what he *knows.* Even the trope of the angel is comic, costumed in mythical attire, stuck with wings that will undo him, like a clown if one considers, as Benjamin does, the pretense of biblical attire and its absurdity.[8]

He is the locus of more than a contradiction. The performance required of him by his readers, that of conveying a healing secret, of being the messenger of the *Spirit,* is poetic. Formalized, his wings still attest to flight and he is given nonetheless animal *accoutrements* (wings with feathers). In popular culture today the angel appears fallen into the quotidian, more like the vampire (banally familiar and integrated into society in, say, *True Blood*). At a certain point the figure of the angel's planned obsolescence—as mes-

senger, sign, promise—dissolves back into the matter it was intended to exceed. The phrase "materialist spirit" drifts back toward the nonhuman broadly, where personification is withheld and from where the construct of the human is as if viewed inversely as thing. The human-on-human twentieth-century model of war (with an enemy other) is today collectivized as a species in relation to a war with itself, its world, technics, terrestrial "life," with time. The new angel as the last anthropomorphized mediator with the appearance of a human face and form might be thought to yield, momentarily, to a *counterinspiriting of the anorganic.* One should resist any temptation to cast this as "apocalyptic." What is implied by climate change is, on the contrary, *banal,* the consequence of displaced biomass and waste, utterly material, the accelerated despoilments of the hyperindustrial and global era, related to oil, microbes, life forms, and technologies.[9]

6

If this last angel recedes, *abandons* his place as anthromorph and go-between, he takes *face* with him—the beautiful androgyne barricade before a set of interacting trace-chains and viral events without personification. This makes any materialist spirit in the era of climate change elusive, dispirited. In the revocation of face, the materialist spirit is apparent not in soaring resistance to capital or to transcendental or idealist pretexts but in a sort of depersonification and banalization of a "materiality" understood outside embodiments or binaries, as life shapes and inorganic formations, molecular shifts, translations of biomass to energy or light. The angel's face is pulled away.[10] One shifts from a time in which "shock" represented a counterstroke to a time where one encounters, from without, geomorphic events that require different categories of duration to enter perceptual memory—for instance, the cinematized inertias of glacial meltoff. The latter can have the cataclysmic effect of a meteor impact or nuclear winter yet is not representable by shock, blasting, or the perpetual "out of jointness" of a nonpresent present. The *artifaction* of any nonpresent "present" partakes of structures that can be stretched or applied otherwise, as occurs in other life formations that subsume different temporalities and speeds (the mayfly, the sloth, the amphibian). What the disappearing angel revokes, with face, is any possibility that the MH's interpretation of his project can be coherent.[11] The problematics of *hospitality*—to return Derrida to this discussion—appear here degraded if not revoked as the "eco" is turned (inside) out.

What was called "metaphysics" was a cover for a *semantic-behavioral model* once linked to tribal preservation and later transferred to acquisi-

tion, property, eating, *seeing* itself. That is, it would be bound to a compulsive interiorization, along with habits of personification and community construction ("*we*'s" depend on exclusion and enemy others). This empty production of "interiority" through consumption is displayed in the obese bodies of airports and malls in America today. The "new angel" goes a step further than Benjamin made apparent to those who read him as, indeed, some "Angel of History," that is, read still from the position of the unawakened dead. His human face recedes irreversibly, breaks into digital points. "Materiality" arises here as an avenging specter that brings the outside of the archive, the point at which its limit as human archive is exposed to mutation, together with micrological marks precedent to any memory formation.

Two points, again. One here suspends Derrida's oft-literalized ban on addressing "the future" as what, by definition, would preempt the latter from arriving. It was not that metaphysics was installed, say with the Greeks, at which point hermeneutic reflexes, communal investments, and transcendental signifiers were released into the injustices of history. Rather, *metaphysics* would be the name for a perpetual relapse bound to a collective semantic compulsion to restore an *eco* and the repetition of language seeking to establish the same: the compulsion to interiorize, the autoimmune. This is what the angel abandons or is abandoned by, including being an angel. "Presence" was not decreed by metaphysics but constructed as a perpetual disappearance by the technics that had made it impossible. Thus *it* leads, more or less calculably, not just through monotheistic formations and the reversible idealist-materialist axis but to melting glaciers, the credit collapse, extincted life forms. Today this viral effect shifts from the fratricidal wars of imperial states and tribal others to the postglobal, totalized, invisible, autogenic wars of the "human" collectively with its "outside," itself, and its disappearing futures. Such allochronic wars, *time wars,* remain indifferent to phenomenological discriminations.[12]

7

One arrives at the "materialistic historiographer's" dilemma: to displace archival programs, to open alternative possible "futures" to those seemingly prescribed, or totalized, the MH must alter anteriority violently, "blast" or activate a dormant trace or force of use to the present, and reinscribe the archive from which such would then emerge. This might take the form of shifting from one hierarchy of memory and reference—say, a period analysis—to a larger frame or event that, for the present's purposes, accounts for it. But to go parabolic, as Thesis 13 does, however, lets fall away

those intrahistorial telescopings before what can certainly not be called an other, an absolute other, an otherness of the other, or any of the alterity declensions recently fetishized to maintain the semblance of the one doing the naming, extending, recognizing, incorporating. The MH's would be a "politics of memory" (the update offered by *Specters of Marx*).[13] The angel's removal unbalances the "materialist historiographer" before he is in place—which, in a sense, he never is—by precipitously removing the three things presupposed: personification, an able gaze, and an archival mediation. Something arrives from behind or outside the archive as conceived.

So the angel betrays his post. As the last humanlike intermediary and mytheme, a messenger for an unrepresentable other that has more in common with oil than it does with a "god," he takes with him *personification* and *face.* The parable of the "new" angel of history is not about the latter's impotence but about the destruction that the positing of him in this position has itself facilitated as the dolled-up version of a formalized if void sign. The question of any contemporary materialist spirit in the era of climate change moves to the obverse side of this screen. It oscillates between where the MH works the archive and the disappearance of the last anthromorph and mirror. It would perhaps switch sides, side with the rebellion of the molecular and the biomorphic against the anthropocene parenthesis—opening to a disintegration of representation beyond "life" or life forms as organized by memory.

The materialist spirit splits, in the "Theses," between the MH (materialist*ic* historio*grapher)* and the void created by the new angel of history's farcical depiction. This split further harasses the "Theses" from within. It in turn doubles any possible extension into a split screen as well—in which the position of the angel would be maintained, with "weak messianism," the future held as if open, and this to perhaps placate the faces turned expectantly. On the one hand is the work of archival transformation, of altering the import and reading of it, of blasting other pasts into different configurations of time; on the other, there is a falling away of representational borders. As remarked, the "Theses" never does name the gathering cloud of Nazism as the "enemy." The "enemy" is *historicism,* a received temporalizing and a knitting together of "facts" that, thinking it adds to Enlightenment order, fuels the furnace of a closing era. Similarly, the aims of eugenic wars of the twentieth century have simply been transferred to nanoscience and the hyperwealthy of the twenty-first anticipating, amid a neofeudal consolidation, a coming "population culling." Benjamin refused to situate the MH's dilemma in the absurdly extreme historical moment of the Nazi takeover of Europe—which he read as symptomatic, not unusual,

contingent, and preparatory at best to the broader war between the species and itself, or the terrestrial life it portended.

The MH's strategy is to seize on the nonpresence of time to itself to "blast" potentially new mnemonic grids, conceiving of temporal threads as a plasticity. It would reanimate temporal forces archivally dormant. Yet as the eviscerated angel disappears before a set of inorganic expanses, the MH is tugged toward a non-site at which a sheer anteriority of trace interfaces with that "materiality" which approaches outside of the archive and is constitutive of it (marks, sounds). The figure of inky inscription segues to the histories of stone carving and carbon, to pencils and toward the pools of oil where liquefaction occurs and, in turn, ancient organic decay becomes "light." The historicism that Benjamin attacked is a program for managing time and reference. It has affiliates and other names (empiricism, causal genealogies, utopism). What Benjamin meant by historicism then bears a remote analogy to the veer of critical energies in the 1990s to new historicisms, "history," and politically astute culturalist studies, which embraced representationalism with a certain triumphalist faith that strangely paralleled the neoliberalist orgy it "politically" critiqued.[14]

The angel of history decamps from angelicism and history. There is nobody left at that post—the last anthropomorphic phantom and mediator with a human face turned toward it from *the other side.* The angel abandons its contract of representation and teleological pretense. And it is no longer the MH who can be entrusted alone to summon and manage archival blasting to keep open still virtual futures. At a certain point, say "tipping points," archival strategies dwindle before what arrives as if from the outside of the archive (though generated from it, as consumption, perception, grammatization, the Ponzi scheme of resource depletion). Benjamin's "Theses" breaks with and against itself or its politically recognizable, performative apparatus as weak messianic time is tested by what exceeds it. In a sense this is irrelevant, for its condition was impossibility to begin with. It accords, in the "Theses," with the core of an analysis that, against logic, did not take the Nazi overrun of Europe as its target or even reference: rather, it regarded that from afar, the course of organic life on earth (as a place-holder) as another possibility or symptomatic (of which, Benjamin notes, no one should be surprised). He is gazing not at the human and techno-warfare of his own moment. The point of "reference" shifts decisively: if there is a "new angel" to be indexed to the human compulsion to deferral narratives, Ponzi schemes of reserve (including conceptual faiths), personification, and so on, it is the non-angel, a materiality without body, disclosed by Thesis 18—or, in today's lexicon, "climate change."

Today this appears clearer: the fratricidal world war between two poles on the Enlightenment epistemopolitical spectrum, fascism and democratic market capitalism, gives way in the amnesiac "global" moment to follow before the disclosure of the underlying war between human autogenesis and the mutations of terrestrial, infraorganic, and technomaterial forces of time-space and "life" as an effect. Across this band human modernity or dominance of earth is an infinitesimal point in a plastic continuum. The war between peoples and nations, endless historical vendettas and doublings, is as if countered from without: it is now one between the totality of a linguistically defined species and its supposed exterior, its ideational premises, it molecular sustenance. It is the autogenic war under way when passed "tipping points" put a present in a self-feeding time bubble with calculably disappearing futures and specters of autoextinction. This is the horizon of "organic life" that Benjamin's text hails against the ideologies of human history.

While it is not clear that survival or disappearance means anything in the broader context of life forms, it brutally interrupts any model that depends on the possibility of alternative futures to those programmed. It opens the question less of an *outside of the archive* ("the"?) than where what is called archive backs into or touches other or allochronic archival orders not accessed in script. *Reine Sprache* as a virtual meltdown of language forms to their micrological atoms, which they all share, continues the meltdown until it permeates all life formations as contesting forms of embattled semiosis, proto-mimetic, "evolutionary," precisely not linked to the anteriority fetish and archival self-situating of the human empire—easily captured, from within, by media streams and telecratic repetitions. The "new" dispensation opens different questions about "justice" and different definitions of "life" than those of interhuman struggle, repression, resentment, and consumption. It remains interesting that Derrida, or the "late Derrida" as we say, never turned explicitly from his address of ethics or religion or politics to address climate change—as if it were the calculated blind or constitutive limit he warded off. It is also the case that something in *deconstruction,* a nonhumanist and undeveloped side, not "political" in the then public sense, might seem to lead precisely there.

8

The MH runs up against two obstacles. The historicism that Benjamin attacks bears a remote analogy to, and genealogy with, the critical energies in the 1990s turned toward new historicisms, returns to "history," and politi-

cally astute culturalist studies, the overfetishization of a supposed "other" or "otherness of the other" one was to enter, commune with, or absorb. Embracing sophisticated representationalism, it appears to have accompanied without a hitch the triumph and implosion of neoliberalism and the credit and credibility crisis that, today, absorbs, defers, blinds, and accelerates any address of the ecocatastrophic.

The *last* angel of history is carried off by a *storm* from the "future"—which signals the latter's dissolution as a commodity. The face of that storm of "progress" includes the increasingly compressed acceleration of human times—the exponential curves outbidding themselves, today, as with the suffusing of the global economies with megadebt. These are required by hyperconsumption in a "growth" economy, and the vortex of financialization and derivatives (the Ponzi schemes of debt and reference), a vanishing time bubble of "peak everything" (oil, humans, water). The second face of the storm is, in a sense, the storm of extreme weather itself—that is, a force outside any model of sovereignty. Something happens, Derrida begins by suggesting in *Specters of Marx,* not in time but *to time:* "What is happening is happening to age itself, it strikes a blow at the teleological order of history. What is coming, in which the untimely appears, is happening to time but does not happen in time." The Potemkin façades of theoretical nomenclature dissolve to disclose the era of the irrelevance of "eras," the implications of the term anthropocene. There is more than a vague sense in which this category interferes with emancipatory or utopic desire (the polity of man), as it does with any "weak messianism" that a hypothetical late deconstruction would want to recirculate or strategically market.

The vaudeville angel of history gestures toward a Judeo-Christian and utopist Marxian repertoire but negates both as part of an implacable charade. It pivots the legacy of spirit and of materialism off one another, disassembling both. It is not that the Christo-Marxian adventure would be the cause of the *anthropocene* error but that the latter implied a theotropic mechanism linked to language (the promise, say). That theotropic reflex or relapse would have required these or other narratives to cover it in any case, and would devise innumerable alibis to cover its voracious consumptions, wars, virtual genocides, and biospheric depletions.

This last angel, rather like a "last man," abandons contracts of representation and teleological promises. He does so by force, not choice (the storm), though he is written as dissociating himself from the performance of a promise the others, his readers, turn to him for (or so he thinks). He "wants" to continue, more or less, if only to assuage his readership and undead fans (what, to take advantage of an aside, replicates what "late Der-

rida" appears doing by degrees, and which his appropriation of *weak messianism* is as much an emblem of as "hospitality"). And since this last new and new last angel is but a caricature of cognitive subjectality, the angel mimes a certain "human" simulation or conception of consciousness.

Benjamin assigns the *MH* a task, but then produces a countertext that buckles the already compromised thread of *weak messianism*—which would not happen so simply by Derrida's *X without X* app. The latter becomes autotelic, since it must keep the future open for anything at all to occur, even as failed, but does so without any possible messianism whatever. *Weak messianism* implies: act as if messianic time opens the future, even though the structure of temporality guarantees nonarrival, perhaps the opposite of the desired, and the pretense is irreal. So the never-to-be messiah is similar to the angel of history as he is forced to abandon his position, which was faux all along—taking face with it. If the storm from the future seems one of exponentially accelerating technologies ("progress") it is also the violence of a sheer technics of organic life on earth. The angel ups the ante against the MH, in effect, by making his task pointless—which he seems to regard only as an ultimate test and provocation. For human institutions to evolve ideally, like any premise of democracy, they would need to have sufficient energy, water, and transport, and to be free of *absolute* threats or that the system itself was not in a suicidal phase. That is, it would have to not be in a pretended permanent state of exception that would become unexceptional. The "Theses" undermines its own program as the condition of its (im)possibility, but what disturbs is that it floods and dispossesses.

Thus, it is not the MH who can alone be entrusted to manage archival blasting or keep the future open to arrive. He cannot keep open still virtual futures. He is not facing a historicism that can virally reconfigure endlessly, like the fiction of metaphysics itself. Benjamin has his angel transition to where the MH cannot ostensibly go: to a materiality so precise it burns off all traditional uses of the word (one argument in Latour's piece is that the term "materiality" needs to be dropped altogether), a metrics whose resistance is its nontranslatability back into any of the terms in circulation. If there is a palpable agency in the absence of the personification machine, that might be the granular, mud, oil, the border zones of the anorganic. It would not curtail the domain of the animal as that without language or, in turn, raise animals to "subjects," but view language as nonhuman (as Benjamin does in "The Task of the Translator"), a "biosemiosis" that pervades animation.

Hamlet's father's ghost is but the occasion for the *visor effect* itself—without face, without paternity, the visor effect looks at one before one looks, without person or subject behind it:

> The perspective has to be reversed, once again: ghost or revenant, sensuous-non-sensuous, visible-invisible, the specter first of all sees *us.* From the other side of the eye, visor effect, it looks at us even before we see *it* or even before we see period. We feel ourselves observed, sometimes under surveillance by it even before an apparition. Especially—and this is the event, for the specter is *of* the event—it sees us during a *visit.* It (re)pays us a visit [*Il nous rend visite*]. Visit upon visit, since it returns to see us and since *visitare,* frequentative of *visere* (to see, examine, contemplate), translates well the recurrence of returning, the frequency of a visitation. (101)

One must discriminate here. There is the *visor effect,* and there is the fact that the visor effect makes us posit a who or "it" behind the visor—when in fact it is this effect itself, without subjectal force (not, say, the ghost of a "father," hence Horatio's just suspicion), and without in fact all the stagecraft suggested here (it "sees us," it "repays us a visit," and so on). The visor effect covers and shreds face, offering intervals and bars, a semiosis precedent to letteration or word. Exoskeletal, it precedes any "face" projected behind it to create an intentional and answerable (human) other.

What looks in advance is called an *it.* Or rather, *it* is not even an "it." It implies the intervals of the war helmet's metal visor, not eyes, whose alternations manifest *spacing* as the bare rhythms preceding phenomenality or semiosis. It precedes alphabet or sign. All of this does not deter the MH, since the specter of extinction is irrelevant to the archival and angelic wars waged from within—even if that archive were to turn against it(self), sicken of itself, or suicide one of its programs. Here the question of "justice" is unwieldy, since instead of negotiating human decisionism, or the "otherness of the (human) other" in its situational and legal variations, it turns against an entire criminal acceleration of the human as constructed, as the organism who consumes "life" and creates for itself faux interiority, iconic angels, in the name of what is outside it. Derrida looks back (say, from the rim of the archive) to better manage the expectant readers, to engage their communal expectations, as if to keep open their (or deconstruction's) institutional future. This permeates the phantom of a nonexistent "democracy to come."

9

Thus the supposedly "new" angel of history turns into the dispirited *nonangel of climate change.* Face no longer adheres, and the programmed relapse of reading is mimed by the fable of the angel's relationship to the

undead—taking their supposed desire for redemption, anyway, as a pretext for dissimulation.[15] What is discarded is not just "historicism." The *angel who is not one* is essentially left holding the bag of a Ponzi scheme logic and a systemic con. It is, like the storms or global warming or the economic and ecological accelerations (the eco-eco disaster), irreversible, a one-way street.

What Thesis 18 discloses, however, is a scene without mourning, which the angel clearly has no time for. What it also does without doing anything is situate politics in the twenty-first century in the epistemographic mutations and wars, in which the possibility of reinscribing preoriginary or default settings of perception, reference, and time intensifies.

Is it Derrida's rhetorical strategy, in *Specters of Marx,* to keep the ghost of angelicism alive ("a politics of memory"), and to do so by recasting the figure of "weak messianism"? Even regressing from what Benjamin's text does with it? He calls it spectrology or hauntology or spectragenics. But the ghost, he reminds us, always comes from the future. It is a compromise, he thinks, suited to the moment, the triumphalism of neocons after the fall of the communist East (as if that were "Marxism"), in the face of the sly efforts on the stalwart left to appropriate that as an endless future of "formal democracy." He addresses in his "ten plagues" of the supposed new world order that never arrived only human-on-human politics. He occludes reference to the ecocatastrophics that drives the collective game board at a critical juncture "in" time. The gothicism exploited by the metaphor of haunting, its *literariness,* seems to have bracketed its currency or value—despite the brilliance of its formal summary of all Derrida might have had to say, finally, about phenomenality and the event. Derrida refuses the names of *matter* or *materialism* altogether as suggesting idealist ontologies displaced into a narrative mobilized by social justice and diverted into a utopian creed. Responding to the triumph of neoliberalism, Derrida is directed by the occasion—by his own mercurial *contretemps*—which, in this, exemplifies a running contamination in "late Derrida." In two decades one has witnessed the implosion not only of free-market capitalism, "American" power, the energy infrastructure, and the premises of continuity with the recent past ("history") altogether—a rupture, dispersal, devolution, and acceleration of threats now irreversible in nature, all extending beyond not only the premise of borders and homelands, but also of species and econometric models, with a corresponding doubling down and consolidation of neofeudal global orders (the exponential and irreversible division of wealth, a *virtual* species split).[16]

What could with intricate modifications be called the "late" Derrida's faux angelicism juggles the "secret" that the arc of human modernity rested

against a terrestrial other that was open to view yet irreducible to the rhetorical treatment of an otherness of the other. In this regard, "late" Derrida was not deconstructive enough. Turning again and again to deconstruct human institutions, he chose to occlude the emergent parameters of irreversible and catastrophic climate change and terrestrial mutation.

10

A recent work challenges the general drift that the canonization of a "late Derrida" has taken in an interesting fashion, essentially splitting the "Derridas" into autosubverting columns folded back and rhetorically autocontesting in implications for the direction, or formations, that would settle into in various readerships. What is striking is that the deceived readership, or those accounted for here, would be those technically "closest" to him (translators, dedicated exegetes), in a manner that raises questions. The questions it raises takes numerous partial forms, including that of Derrida's rogue rhetorical strategies and anticipating, perhaps plotting, of an autoimmune phase of consolidation of a certain "deconstruction" (implicitly vacated, a deconstruction without "deconstruction") whose intent would be, in part, that of anchoring various threads of his production in traditionalist and high humanist canons, academic mainstreams, as a certain phase—a calculation of canonical survival beyond death, at a price. The narrative of this would involve what is misrepresented as his *turn* to ethics, religion, and political institutions in his "later" writings—even where Derrida remarked refutes any "turn" as such, and so on. In *Radical Atheism: Derrida and the Time of Life* (2008), Martin Hägglund indirectly posits that the general humanization of deconstruction was, to leap ahead, a rhetorical feint by which Derrida strategized inserting a logic of the trace into twentieth-century humanist and institutional thought as a series of contamination. The title is potentially misleading, to the degree "atheism" remains a theotrope itself. And the approach remains bound to the insistence on a Derrida who can be faithfully restored by valorizing early moves, that a certain "Derrida" can be repurged from a trail of mild recuperations, retheologizations, and regressions undertaken, nonetheless, in his "name."

It would be out of character if Derrida's text were not internally contested by different, clashing itineraries (as Derrida allowed at the end, in another context, "I am at war with myself"). Such would accord with his own late reflection that after his death, within two years, there would be nothing left of his trajectory, despite awareness of the networks of disciples, translators, and interdisciplinary extensions he left in his wake—the

latter, he would know, destined to enact a programmed version of an auto-immune formation he understood. The more interesting question isn't that between an "early" or "late" Derrida but whether keeping the angel in play, technologized as specter, involved a miscalculation or a contamination. The rhetorical moment that marked this dossier in Derrida after all—that of wedding deconstruction to "justice," and this for an American cadre—seems as much a flirtation with bad faith as a gesture of rhetorico-political despair at the community's then lackluster fortunes or resilience.

According to Hägglund, a pattern emerges. The general drift of Derrida's more prominent commentators had been to normatize and reinscribe the violence of Derrida's itinerary in a more or less hybrid restitching or translation *back.* The now routine attributions of "negative theology," the buoyancy of an "ethical" motif (departing from Lévinas), the invitation to proactively mark a politics and religiously nuanced invocation of difference, and so on—all relapse to categories Derrida essentially blocked, yet rhetorically put in play. Lévinas's use of face to denote the human other explicitly becomes, instead, a strategy of Derrida's in his late phase not unlike the use of Marx in *Specters of Marx,* in part to lure and contaminate a rich philosophic discourse that would then be bored through by a differential calculus that exceeded and vacated these referential traditions, yet which the individual critics (the list is too broad to personalize here) could not not recuperate and normatize.

Hägglund reverses the narrative pretext which "Derrida" developed from a deconstruction of "metaphysics" to a turn toward the institutional and humanist discourses of ethics, religion, law, and so on, making the latter appear contaminating colonializations that would have to shed their precepts and be read through the irreversible premises of the earliest conceptual dispersals of time and trace still. He situates this by returning late figures such as "justice" or "democracy to come" to deliteralized strategies of rhetorical maneuvers that would pay the price of literalization to seed a resistant discourse that would take a generation or more to shake out, essentially marking Derrida as having, so to speak, *played* his disciples as carriers (an exception to this, and exemplification, would be the bare-fisted treatment of Nancy in *On Touching*). "Justice" would return to its Greek sense of a sort of *eris,* a scene of war, the Chinese laughing Buddha's glee at all annihilations that occur. One wonders why this book had to be written, so obvious is it from a distance, and it is a testament first to the calculated (academic) relapse against which Derrida aimed at a future reader. The normatization and faux theologization of Derrida would occur not in the polemics of his most iconic enemies (an Eagleton) but through his translators, *extenders,* "friends."

But Hägglund's use of Derrida's reading of any nonpresent as the fulcrum or wedge here leads to a premise of "survival" as the overarching drive of this difference, guaranteeing nothing, inscribing no decision in justice as such—only negotiation and risk, betrayal and contamination. Hägglund's reliance on the "autoimmune" complex nonetheless deletes the suicidal variation that Derrida came to mark as its logics intensified and would be applied to the "terrorist" effect in America he lived to analyze. But it is not my aim here to indicate the limits Hägglund must subscribe to, including the commitment to extending legacies, the possibly weak Darwinianism (as opposed to weak messianism) implied, or the deletion of a "death" drive from the "time of life" his subtitle names.

Derrida eschewed the term *material,* and when compelled to address de Man's covert "Benjaminian" trope—"the materiality of inscription"—recoiled to his *X without X* formula, calling it a "materiality *without matter.*" Whatever *inscription* might pretend to name, it gestures toward the non-site (Derrida would later call it *khora*) where mnemonic programs emerge as consolidating responses to a preoriginary mark or mnemonic incision. The gesture implies a backloop in which—without authorship or control, since it would erase its own premise at that point—a prephenomenal dis- or reinscription would be posited, if not provided agency, out of which alternative epistemographic fields and decisions would be possible. This is the point of "risk," what is missing from the representations of deconstruction as a sort of theological commentary on "Derrida." To the extent that would not occur, there would be a relapse (de Man's term) or weak reinscription, like the normatizing examples Hägglund inspects in the adaptions of Derrida to political, ethical, or religious premises. The strategy would suggest one of generations—to gain entry to the institutional discourse hubs but let the generation of carriers get it wrong, still play out the half measures of the family.[17] It would be readable according to what limits too seemed prescribed to this apparatus: ecocatastrophics would be occluded, along with select zones (one might add to this list cinema itself, or the specter, for Derrida, of de Man, who had no use for "metaphysics" and read deconstruction as over upon its arrival).

Of course, it may be that what Hägglund wishes to correct—the inevitable dependence of this "survival" on academic writing, academic media, academic personalities, related debts and capital, the compulsion to fetishize "legacy," specifically Derrida's—both is inescapable and, inversely, feeds the autoimmune spiral. One would be tempted to ask of a certain "spirit of deconstruction" in the way that *Specters of Marx* claims a "certain spirit of Marxism" and suggest, today, a discrimination between maintaining deconstruction as a franchise (and tending, in programmatic fashion,

to the *extension* of and tending to Derrida's archival produce and author-specific intervention) and a general rearticulation to what had animated "deconstruction" in its appearance or pursuit across the histories of writing. Plato, one may argue, was *ur*-deconstructive, yet would be formalized, with some Christian help, as Platonism, and so on. Could one then speak of a deconstruction without "deconstruction," without the presupposition of an entity, so named, that was the haven of a family or community in accord, presumed legatees, which "Derrida"—who would have it both ways—repeatedly cut off ("I am not of the family")? That would call for the act of anonymous dispersal, the forgoing of the entire apparatus of the great signature or thinker, interrupting the literalizations and betrayals (now prolonged) of supposed mourning—and turning toward the one domain, nonanthropomorphic, that represents the mutation that has arrived from without, the horizon missing from Derrida's itinerary (which requires analysis as a decision): "climate change." This is indirectly to ask again whether Derrida, in appropriating *weak messianism* from Benjamin's text to channel his project of a spectragenics, does not return, in a sophisticated rhetorical torsion, to the angelicism that, in Benjamin, the term itself relinquishes? This would imply, in turn, a rereading of Derrida's late strategy from the perspective of Benjamin's autoexterminating angel (who abandons his entourage), from the "storm."

11

Derrida's strategies for working the aporia of hospitality, of ethics, of contemporary politics, or religion, would silhouette a choice to participate in his own domestication (to control its future contaminations), much as the polemic with neoliberalism and occlusion of climate change frames the dated occasion *Specters of Marx* impersonates.[18] By tarrying among the aporia or pathos of decisionism and mourning, the shortcut appeal to "the otherness of the other" and human "justice," a certain narcissistic subject-effect was rhetorically kept in spectral circulation or as a faux contract.

The angel is not the one who sees. He is not an allegorical functionary, since he has neither powers nor meaning. He is a Potemkin angel, whose positing as "angel" had launched the catastrophe. He betrays the reading masses who are turned to his face, expecting any returns from their designated broker. The angel's position before the storm is embarrassing—wings pulled back, face disarticulated in impotence or horror, among else by how he is projected upon as savior by masses of undead readers.[19] Thus, the angel is not an allegory of Benjamin's "materialistic" hero or counter-Zarathustran, the *MH.* He is not a hero at all. He is not a figure of pathos,

as one might read him coming out of the theophantic traditions. He is comical, retired but still in zombie circulation, like a host of Benjaminian words (messianism, materiality, history). The real subject of this dissimulating text is the "storm."

Thus "terror" at the rim of the twenty-first century's unraveling would require the still human face of the enemy, or at least a name (Osama, Saddam). Any *materialist spirit* today shifts from humans to a storm of processes indifferent to sovereignty, anthropism, face—that is, toward the nonembodied visor effect, that of a materiality that precedes the "letter" and animation.

12

> The specter, as its name indicates, is the frequency of a certain visibility. And visibility, by its essence, is not seen, which is why it remains . . . beyond the phenomenon and beyond being. The specter is also, among other things, what one imagines, what one thinks one sees and which one projects—on an imaginary screen where there is nothing to see. Not even the screen sometimes, and a screen always has, at bottom, in the bottom or background that is, a structure of disappearing apparition. (100–1)

Let us say, this time, the specter is of climate change. And let us say that the "structure of (a) disappearing apparition" coincides with a structure marking this biospheric mutation and the disappearance not of a past event or death but the organization, gone forever, of something called "life" as we know it. If so, then the agency of the spectral would be inverted, and could even seem to have been superseded by a kind of zombism of a broader scope. The disappearances in effect would overwhelm anything like discrete "mourning" and include not only the local conditions of human cultures but innumerable life forms—and prospectively the cognitive or writing center of the episode. Such a specter is what is then not visible because it perpetually shapes the "visible." It can't escape the *visible-invisible* nexus.

Derrida in *Specters* ignores this broader, other, ecocatastrophical disappearance to refocus on contemporary human domains and appropriate or spectralize Marxian "materialism." Here Derrida attempts to engage *politics* as of the world of men primarily, mimes the received terms of "politics" he would disown, appropriates a certain "Marx," engenders a "politics of memory" (up to a point). That is, he is so preoccupied in inhabiting the discourse presented to him that, in listing these "plagues," he occludes and

avoids the most overarching one, that is, "climate change" itself, and the latter is allowed to persist as the invisible implicitly. Does Derrida partake of this late twentieth-century blind or, at very best, eschew it for scriptive-strategic reasons? Implicitly, the *archive* of life mutation exceeds that of *human* writing. From the former's perspective, perhaps, deconstruction and the "metaphysics" it must invent to stage itself are part, still, of the anthropocene.

One is left with a problem that could be put thus: Derrida's favoring of spectragenics, for all of its gothic seancing, for all its literary techniques and technics, manages to post itself as an extended humanism rhetorically—while adopting the positions of the spectral visitation. This is why, for some, it is difficult to extract from Derrida's political agenda more than the sense of "justice" of a "good liberal" (Jameson). In turn, the "*weak* messianism" he repositions here recuperates, for his own ends, what in Benjamin may in fact be no messianism whatsoever. Derrida is contaminated holding the angel of history in place as a marionette as long as possible. It suggests either the calculation of what his readership desires to cohere around "deconstruction," a decision it was not yet time for this, hence a rhetorical calculation, or else the limit of what he deemed archive was (something already within memory systems, canons, received programs). One could have wished that, rather than falling for the poker bluff of the other here, and covering his supposed textism, he had allowed the latter to run, hyperbolic and viral, into the orders of the anorganic—into a sort of *abiosemsis* without borders. Similarly, Derrida's favoring of "hospitality" elsewhere, as if it were an infinite labyrinth of inversions (and "absolute hospitality"), retains the specter of the "eco" for rhetorical uses, chooses to tarry in the ghost of a house that, "deconstructed," would be maintained as its own phantom.

If *spectragenics* blanked on this other logic of disappearances, if Derrida's "weak messianism" appropriates Benjamin's phrase by retracting it (we may contrast this with de Man explicitly, who simply remarks that there is "no messianism" whatever in what Benjamin purports), if Derrida had become too enamored of the *X without X* formula to remark its seepages and doubling against itself—there would, as in *Specters of Marx,* be a rhetorical gesture that plays to the terms he implicitly and elsewhere eschews nonetheless: *the* community, *the* politics, the "ethical," the "religious," "justice." The materiality or figure of the *materialistic* that Benjamin invokes and Derrida knows but would do without may accord with the storm that obliterates the "angel" or its theophantic caricature. Derrida in this respect remains in a conservative position before the logics Benjamin opens and de Man requires.

The angel of climate change is an *autoexterminating angel,* one that first destroys the angelicism of the sign, the premise of hermeneutic mediation, and the backturned posture of addressing (or not) the pleading faces of the zombied or dead. But what emerges from this conflagration within Benjamin's text, this rift in which a dissimulating non-angel is cast against the prospect of any materialistic historiography, deletes the messianic, tortured attempt to *play* the charismatic angel, the "just," and to play both sides rhetorically. Instead, the logics of the one-way street arrive, comparable to the irreversibility of catastrophic climate change unfolding today.

Notes

Introduction / Gregory C. Stallings, Manuel Asensi, and Carl Good

1. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology,* sect. 1.4.B.

2. As is well known, the etymology of this word was in dispute from the earliest times. *Religare* is the most commonly assumed root, but Cicero held that "religion" was derived from *relegere,* "to read again."

3. Michel Foucault, "What Is Critique?," in *The Politics of Truth,* 28–30 passim.

4. John Caputo, *What Would Jesus Deconstruct? The Good News of Postmodernism for the Church.*

Eucharistic Imaginings in Proust and Woolf / Richard Kearney

I am very grateful to all my colleagues in the "Meaning and Transcendence" seminar at the Jesuit Institute at Boston College for several of the insights in this chapter, in particular those with whom I had an extensive creative correspondence: on Joyce, Proust, and Woolf, namely, Mary-Joe Hughes, Dennis Taylor, Anne Davenport, Tom Epstein, Marty Cohen, Andy Von Hendy, Vanessa Rumble, Anne Bernard, and Kevin Newmark. I am also very grateful to my assistant, Christopher Yates, for his invaluable help in editing this essay. Much of what follows in the essay represents the development of an anatheist aesthetics that I have explored elsewhere; see, for example, "Epiphanies of the Everyday: Toward a Micro-Eschatology," in *After God: Richard Kearney and the Religious Turn in Phenomenology,* ed. John Panteleimon Manoussakis (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), and my related essays, "*Traversing the Imaginary: Epiphanies in Joyce and Proust,*" in *Traversing the Imaginary: Richard Kearney and the Postmodern Challenge,* ed.

Peter Gratton and John Panteleimon Manoussakis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), "Enabling God," in *After God,* and "Hermeneutics of the Possible God," in *Givenness and God: Questions of Jean-Luc Marion,* ed. Ian Leask and Eoin G. Cassidy (New York: Fordham University Press), 220–42.

1. Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf,* 3:457–58.

2. Paul Ricoeur, "Life in Quest of Narrative," 26, emphasis added.

3. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* 3:170.

4. Paul Ricoeur, *On Translation,* 23.

5. On this later point, see Julia Kristeva, *Time and Sense: Proust and the Experience of Literature,* 3–22. For a eucharistic hermeneutics of reading, see also Valentine Cunningham, *Reading after Theory,* 148ff.: "Here is a body of text and the text as body, the body of the other, the text as other, to be consumed, ingested, in a memorial act, an act of testimony, of worldly witness. . . . In holy communion the believer is blessed and graced, signed as Christ's own, marked as sanctified. In reading on this [eucharistic model], the reader is, in some way or another, also graced, blessed, marked as the text's own."

6. Søren Kierkegaard, *Repetition.*

7. "Transubstantiation," *The Oxford English Dictionary.* This definition refers especially to the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church dating back to 1533, but it also applies with minor variations to the rites of the Greek Orthodox and Anglican churches.

8. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* 246. I am grateful to John Manoussakis for this reference; see Manoussakis's extended discussion of this theme in *God after Metaphysics: A Theological Aesthetics.* Merleau-Ponty also has an intriguing notion of "primary faith" which operates at the most basic level of our ordinary perception and which requires an interruption of critical nonfaith or suspension if we are to return to it as an "enigma" or "wonder" after the event. See, for example, the opening section of *The Visible and the Invisible:* "We see the things themselves, the world is what we see: formulae of this kind express a faith common to the natural man and the philosopher—the moment he opens his eyes; they refer to a deep-seated set of mute 'opinions' implicated in our lives. But what is strange about this faith is that if we seek to articulate it into theses or statements, we enter into a labyrinth of difficulties and contradictions." So our world of primary perception is already, at a prereflective level of lived experience, a primary faith, which the philosophical moment of questioning interrupts. But this interruption—as formalized in Husserl's reduction and epoché for example—does not offer answers so much as invite us to think of ourselves as an "enigma" (3–4). But this enigma should not be thought of in terms of some abstract intellectual curiosity or in terms of an Oedipus riddle to be solved. Rather, it is an enigma, in the sense of a challenge to our preconceived views, an endless wrestling with the options of meaning and meaninglessness in an effort to see what seeing means, to better understand what belief believes. As such, the philosophical suspension of primary faith introduces a sense of "wonder before what is," which in turn allows for the possibility of a second faith in the wake of philosophical interrogation and poetic wonderment.

9. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* 246.

10. These are Merleau-Ponty's words, and while agnostic they are not, I think, neutral: "The Christian God wants nothing to do with a vertical relation of subordination. . . . He is not simply a principle of which we are the consequence, a will whose instruments we are, or even a model of which human values are the only reflection. There is a sort of impotence of God without us, and Christ attests that God would not be fully God without becoming fully man. . . . Transcendence no longer hangs over man; he becomes, strangely, its privileged bearer" (*Phenomenology of Perception,* 83–84).

11. In *Strangers to Ourselves,* Kristeva strongly recommends that we surmount the theocratic dualisms of pure and impure, saved and damned, native and stranger, for, she argues, such dualisms lead to sacrificial scapegoating and war. In my interview with Kristeva in *Debates in Continental Philosophy,* she states, "The big work of our civilization is to fight this hatred—without God" ("Strangers to Ourselves: The Hope of the Singular," 166).

12. Julia Kristeva, *Time and Sense: Proust and the Experience of Literature,* 246.

13. Ibid., 3ff.

14. Ibid., 101. Kristeva comments on Proust's fascination with the Catholic Eucharist and links it with his aesthetic interest in John Ruskin:

> For Proust, who was in search of the real presence of signs, the Mass described as taking place in "the cathedrals that are the greatest and most original expression of French genius" proved to be a living example of the experience sought by his emerging aesthetic. The religion of the "living God" was thoroughly attractive, and it was the primary source of Proust's interest in Ruskin. . . . Proust was sincerely disturbed by anticlerical laws and by the general anticlericalism of governing bodies. At the same time, he recognized that the *écoles libres* held a sectarian view of freemasons and Jews and noted that clericalism itself "had completely freed itself from the dogmas of the Catholic religion. . . . The Christian spirit . . . [has] nothing to do with the partisan spirit which we seek to destroy." . . . With this in mind we see that John Ruskin (1819–1900) was the writer through whom Proust felt he could reinvigorate the religious aesthetic (or the aestheticized religion, for therein lay the entire question) in a modern and progressive fashion. (100–101)

Kristeva goes on to argue that Ruskin's seduction was "aesthetic *as well as* religious." "When Proust outlined his nascent conception of life as 'real life' and artistic experience as a real presence, as 'time embodied' and a 'transubstantiation,' he relied on this confirmed socialist, this admired or challenged modern man" (101).

15. Ibid., 23.

16. Ibid., 102, 106, 108, 133ff. passim.

17. Ibid., 106.

18. Ibid., 108. Kristeva cites this telling passage from Proust's *Contre Sainte-Beuve:* "Crossing a courtyard I came to a standstill among the glittering uneven

paving-stones. . . . In the depth of my being I felt the *flutter* of a past that I did not recognize; it was just as I set foot on a certain paving-stone that this feeling of *perplexity* came over me. I felt an invading *happiness,* I knew that I was going to be enriched by that *purely personal thing, a past impression, a fragment of life in unsullied preservation. Suddenly,* I was flooded by a stream of light. It was the sensation underfoot that I had felt on the smooth, slightly uneven pavement of the baptistery of Saint Mark's" (107). It is interesting that the other novel under consideration here also ends with a touchstone of a telling kind, the rock of the lighthouse that Mr Ramsay touches in *To the Lighthouse.*

19. Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time,* vol. 7, *Time Regained,* 290.

20. Ibid., 291.

21. Ibid., 290. Gilles Deleuze makes the point in *Proust and Signs* that Proust's experience of "essences" requires the "style" of art and literature to be brought to expression. Proust speaks here of "a qualitative difference in the way that the world looks to us, a difference that, if there were no such thing as art, would remain the eternal secret of each man" (*In Search of Lost Time,* vol. 3, 895). In volume 7, *Time Regained,* Proust famously describes the move from the inner secret essence within each life to the style of literary art an act of "translation."

22. Kristeva, *Time and Sense,* 112.

23. Ibid., 112.

24. Ibid., 112.

25. Ibid., 113.

26. Ibid., 113.

27. Ibid, 3–22, 116. Kristeva also identifies nominal associations here with Marie Madeleine in the scriptures.

28. Ibid., 114.

29. Ibid., 115.

30. Ibid., 115.

31. Ibid., 116.

32. Proust, *In Search of Lost Time,* vol. 2, 23.

33. Ibid., vol. 4, 432.

34. Ibid., vol. 1, 95.

35. Walter Benjamin, "The Image of Proust," in *Illuminations,* 210.

36. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project,* 69. One might also mention here John Caputo's notion of holy "quotidianism" in *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event,* 155–56.

37. Proust, *In Search of Lost Time,* vol. 6, 509.

38. Ibid., 509.

39. Ibid., 509.

40. Ibid., 509.

41. Ibid., 509. The point is not that epiphanies never happened before the library scene; it is that Marcel was not yet ready to see and hear them for what they really were. He had not yet, to cite Deleuze, been fully trained in his "apprenticeship to signs." And it is not until such apprenticeship is accomplished,

through his recapitulative awareness of "being-towards-death" in the library, that Marcel can finally acknowledge the preciousness of even the most banal and discarded events through the lens of time recaptured (*le temps retrouvé).* Art is less a matter of romantic creation than of epiphanic re-creation. For, as Marcel asks, "was not the re-creation by the memory of impressions which had then to be deepened, illumined, transformed into equivalents of understanding, was not this process one of the conditions, almost the very essence of the work of art as I had just now in the library conceived it?" (*In Search of Lost Time,* vol. 6, 525). Such epiphanic understanding marks the moment of *anagnorisis.* Otherwise put, time has to be lost before it can be recovered. Unless the seed dies, accidents cannot be retrieved as essences, contingencies as correspondences, obsessions as epiphanies. Only through the veil of mortality can the sacred radiate across the profane world, which the arrogant repudiate as ineligible for art. It is only after he renounces his promethean will to write that Marcel's previously unexperienced experience is reexperienced in all its neglected richness (and the greater the neglect, the greater the richness). For it is precisely the rejected and remaindered events of Marcel's existence that now return, in and through literature, as "resurrections." The three personas of Marcel—as character, as narrator, and as author—seem to crisscross here for the first time, like three Proustian magi recognizing that the deepest acts of communion are to be found in the most fortuitous acts of ordinary perception.

42. Ibid., vol. 6, 530–31. So what do these Proustian conclusions tell us about epiphany? They indicate, I suggest, that epiphany is a process that is "achieved" in a series of double moves. The first double move is that of mortality and natality. The second is that of metaphor (the translation of one thing into another) and metonymy (the disclosure of new meaning through the accidental contiguity of contingent things), and the third, that of constructing and deconstructing. It is in this last double gesture that the text surpasses itself and finally reaches out toward its future readers. For if we begin with the notion that literature "constructs" an epiphany based on the recreation of impressions recalled in involuntary memory, the literary text in turn "deconstructs" itself to allow for its re-creation by the reader. That is how Penelope's tapestry and Françoise's sewing work—stitching and unstitching, weaving and unweaving, endlessly. In a form of hermeneutic arc, the text configures an epiphany already prefigured by a life that is ultimately refigured by the reader (see Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* vol. 2, especially the section titled "The Traversed Remembrance of Things Past" in chapter 4). And this reader is one who not only cocreates the text with the author but re-creates it again as she returns from "text to action." So if epiphany invites a first move from life to literature, it reinvites us to come back again from literature to life. In both Proust and Woolf, it is indeed Penelope who has the last word.

43. Cited by J. Hillis Miller, "The Rhythm of Creativity: *To The Lighthouse,"* in *Tropes, Parables, Performatives: Essays in Twentieth-Century Literature,* 159.

44. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own,* 102. Cited by Miller, "The Rhythm of Creativity," 169.

45. Erich Auerbach, "The Brown Stocking," in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature,* 536. See also 540 and 552.

46. Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse,* 82.

47. Ibid., 83.

48. Ibid., 97.

49. Ibid., 104–5.

50. Ibid., 104.

51. Ibid., 62. The references to Lily leaping into a "gap" and finding the third, final stroke that draws the "line, there in the centre" is interesting when we consider the image of the "wedge," so intimately and recurrently associated with Mrs Ramsay. This trope carries connotations of a deep inner emptiness or nothingness, as in references to "the wedge of darkness" or "the wedge-shaped core of darkness," which holds out the possibility of some mystical fullness or completion. When we recall that Lily has been trying to compose a portrait of Mrs Ramsay and James in the form of a "purple triangle," we might be tempted to construe Lily's finishing brushstroke as the line that completes the two-sided wedge—the missing third side, so to speak. After which she can say, "it was done. . . . I have had my vision" (209). Interestingly, this vision coincides with the exact moment that the missing father, Mr Ramsay, lands on the rock of the lighthouse and finds acknowledgment in the hearts of his children, James and Cam. He is, so to speak, finally accepted back into the picture of mother and child. This is the moment that Lily, on shore in front of her painting, suddenly finds her "razor's edge" balance between "art and Mr Ramsay." The final "cut" is made, the third stroke applied to the wedge. The triangle is completed, the work done, the novel concluded. This charged figurative imagery of wedge and triangle may be read, I suggest, in aesthetic, psychoanalytic, or Trinitarian terms, or all three combined.

52. Ibid., 63–64. This approximates to the Buddhist and Hindu view that the sacred is in all sentient beings. See, for example, the teaching of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche in this regard: "Pure perception is to recognize the buddha-nature in all sentient beings and to see primordial purity and perfection in all phenomena" (cited in John Makransky, *Awakening Through Love,* 92). The sacramental reference for all natural things is also evidenced in certain biblical texts, such as the Song of Songs (which Mrs Ramsay's vision echoes in the final lines just cited) and in the nature visions of certain Christian mystics, such as Saint Francis and Hildegaarde of Bingen (see in particular her notion of *veriditas,* or the divine "greening" of all things), not to mention Gerard Manley Hopkins or Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Woolf's English Protestant culture may not, however, have made her familiar with such writings. Either way, Woolf's mysticism, however "Asiatic" its allusions at times, remains nondenominational and nonconfessional, one might even say nontheistic or posttheistic—or anatheistic.

53. Virginia Woolf, *Moments of Being,* cited by Martin Corner in "Mysticism and Atheism in *To the Lighthouse,*" 43. In a diary entry of May 9, 1926, Woolf notes she had quarreled with her husband, Leonard, who "disliked the irrational Xtian in me" (Bell, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf,* vol. 3, 801).

54. The metaphor of the razor's edge is a famous verse from Katha Upanishads, 3, 16. Here is the full passage, concerning the discovery of the true mystical sense (Atman-Brahman): "Arise! Awake! Pay attention, / When you've attained your wishes! A razor's sharp edge is hard to cross— / That, poets say, is the difficulty of the path." The passage goes on: "When a man perceives it, / fixed and beyond the immense, / He is freed from the jaws of death" (verse 15). Or again, if a person "proclaims this great secret . . . during a meal for the dead, / it will lead him to eternal life" (verse 17). Eucharistic echoes abound. One might also cite here the mystical notions of immanent transcendence to be found in Hindu swamis such as Ramana and Ramakrishna or Christian Hindu sages such as Abhishiktananda, Bede Griffiths, and Sarah Grant.

55. Woolf, *To the Lighthouse,* 202.

56. Woolf, *A Writer's Diary,* cited by Martin Corner in "Mysticism and Atheism in *To the Lighthouse,*" 48.

57. Ibid.

58. See Miller, "The Rhythm of Creativity," 152–53.

59. Corner, "Mysticism and Atheism," 50.

60. Woolf, *To the Lighthouse,* 192.

61. Ibid., 161.

62. Georges Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images.* I am grateful to my colleague, Stephen Schloesser, for this reference. See also Gaston Bachelard's notion of a similar sacramental aesthetic in his reading of "elemental participation" (based on the Greek notion of *methexis*—e.g. I Corinthians 10:16–17) over against "mimetic representation." (Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*). His account of the material imagination paved the way for Merleau-Ponty's "flesh of the world." See Eileen Rizo-Patron, "Regressus ad Uterum: Bachelard's Alchemical Hermeneutic," and her PhD thesis, "Through the Eye of a Needle: Hermeneutics as Poetic Transformation."

63. Woolf, *To the Lighthouse,* 207.

64. Ibid., 180.

65. Cited in Corner, "Mysticism and Atheism," 51.

66. See Jean-François Lyotard's intriguing comments on "ana" and "post" in the postscript to *The Postmodern Condition.*

Impossible Confessions / Karmen MacKendrick

This essay is adapted from a presentation I gave at a conference, "The Sacred and the Debased in the Work of Georges Bataille," at Occidental College, Los Angeles, in 2008. I am grateful to Malek Moazzam-Doulat and his amazing students for the opportunity and inspiration.

1. Georges Bataille, "Discussion on Sin," in *The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge,* 73 (this work is hereafter cited in the text as DS).

2. Arthur Vermeersch, "Religious Obedience," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia.*

3. "And whereas, in project, the result alone counts, in sacrifice, it is in the act itself that value is concentrated. Nothing in sacrifice is put off until later—it

has the power to contest everything at the instant that it takes place, to summon everything, to render everything present." (Georges Bataille, *Inner Experience,* 137; this work is hereafter cited in the text as *IE*).

4. Georges Bataille, *Guilty,* 79 (this work is hereafter cited in the text as *G*).

5. A small sampling: in *Story of the Eye,* Marcelle hangs herself, and Simone kills a priest. The priest at the heart of *L'Abbé C* ends up tortured to death, but not before the destruction of his soul by his betrayal of those he loves. Of the character Dirty in *Blue of Noon,* the narrator declares, "She's too voracious to go on living. She won't live. . . . I kept thinking that . . . she would die. She disappeared with the train" (*Blue of Noon,* 149; this work is cited in the text as *BN*). The title character of *My Mother* dies, though in a rather offstage way; *The Dead Man,* as the title suggests, features a dead man, in this case at the very beginning of the story.

6. It should be noted that the destruction here attends not only the object or person sacrificed but also the one who performs the sacrifice. Jeffrey Kosky in "Georges Bataille's Religion without Religion" provides a nice summary of this point:

> Bataille maintains that the sacred breaks with the profane, workaday world of productive, economic existence by transgressing the limits of individual existence and conventional morality. Evident in "primitive" religious life with its moments of potlatch, orgy, and other forms of ritual excess, the sacred, for Bataille, culminated in sacrifice—where an individual executes a useless act of unredeemed expenditure, giving without return and so losing without gain. Sacrifice, for Bataille, is therefore always self-sacrifice insofar as the self gives without receiving anything in return and thus defies its own selfhood. (82)

7. Compare this passage from *My Mother:*

> I associated the image I still had of divinity with that, equally violent, of Hansi's voluptuousness, and both of these I associated with those abominations whose potency, whose horribleness were infinite. I had in the days of my godliness meditated upon Christ crucified and upon the ungodliness of His wounds. The torturing nausea which came from an over-indulgence in sensual pleasure had introduced me to that awful confusion in which no sensation existed without being pitched to deliriousness (117; this work is subsequently cited in the text as *MM*).

8. Bataille's lover Colette Peignot in "The Sacred" calls Christ "the eternally humiliated," adding, "The stations of the cross, the story of the spit exalts Christ" (Peignot, *Laure: The Collected Writings,* 39).

9. "I would undress and I would cry out, 'God of terror, very low dost thou bring us, very low hast thou brought us, my mother and me. . . .' I realized in the course of time that I took pride in being like this, and reminding myself that pride was the worst sin of all, I would straighten up" (*MM,* 51, ellipsis in original).

10. Simone serves this function in *Story of the Eye,* the mother in *My Mother,* Madame Edwarda in the story by that name, the Count in *The Dead Man,* Eponine in *L'Abbe C,* Dirty in *Blue of Noon,* and so on.

11. Virginia Burrus, *Saving Shame: Martyrs, Saints, and Other Abject Subjects,* 3.

12. "I persistently note, 'There is no wall between eroticism and mysticism!' It's really quite funny—since they use the same words, deal in identical images, and they refuse to recognize it!" (Bataille, *On Nietzsche,* 131; this work is subsequently cited in the text as *ON*) Again: "The saint turns from the voluptuary in alarm: she does not know that his unacknowledgeable passions and her own are really one" (Bataille, *Erotism,* 7; this work is subsequently cited in the text as *E*). What Bataille himself doesn't quite acknowledge here is that the voluptuary may be just as horrified to see in the chaste confines of the church an impulse so like his own.

13. "Only the way mystics depict their laceration can correspond to my laceration" (*G,* 78). See also the introduction to *Madame Edwarda* (140–44).

14. Michael Richardson, "Seductions of the Impossible: Love, the Erotic and Sacrifice in Surrealist Discourse," 387.

15. Michel Foucault, "Sexuality and Power," 124.

16. Ibid., 125.

17. Burrus, *Saving Shame,* 2.

18. Michel Foucault, "On the Government of the Living," 157.

19. "And so to the treatment of those faults of which we have spoken above, intercourse with other men is not merely no hindrance, but a considerable help" (Cassian, *Conference* 19, XVI).

20. John Cassian, *Conferences* 19, I.

21. *Story of the Eye,* with its various confessional scenes, tries to refuse confession's relentless demands on memory, but finds itself confessing as inadvertently as a blush: "I began writing . . . animated chiefly by a desire to forget, at least for the time being, the things that I can be or do personally. Thus, at first, I thought that the character speaking in the first person had no relation to me" (Bataille, afterword to *Story of the Eye,* 89; this work is hereafter cited in the text as *SE*). Attempting to emphasize his irreligiosity, Bataille confesses his own confessional history: "I went to a priest in August 1914; and until 1920, rarely did I let a week go by without confessing my sins! In 1920, I changed again, I stopped believing in anything but my future chances" (*SE,* 101, from 1943 preface).

22. Blushes occur throughout *My Mother* (38, 48, 68, 70—in the imperative!—97, etc.), in *Madame Edwarda* (150), and in *Story of the Eye* (12, 40, 82), just to give a few representative instances.

23. Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity,* 231.

24. Bataille, *Blue of Noon,* 154 (this work is hereafter cited in the text as *BN*).

25. David Brakke, "The Problematization of Nocturnal Emissions in Early Christian Syria, Egypt, and Gaul," 449, cited in Burrus, *Saving Shame,* 41.

26. Key figures for the interested would be John Cassian, in his *Conferences,* and the late anti-Pelagian writings of Augustine.

27. Foucault, "On the Government of the Living," 157.

28. See Michel Foucault, "About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self": "obedience is a permanent relationship, and even when the monk is old, even when he became, in his turn, a master, even then he has to keep the spirit of obedience as a permanent sacrifice of his own will" (174).

29. Bataille, *Theory of Religion,* 13.

The Third Life of Saint Teresa of Jesus / Manuel Asensi

1. There are multiple versions of this *villancico.* The text here follows the version in *Obras completas de Santa Teresa de Jesús* (Sígueme). The version that appears in José Manuel Blecua's anthology of Spanish Renaissance poetry, published by Clásicos Castalia, is shorter (it has 31 lines, whereas the version I am citing has 59). Furthermore, that version has variants in lines 12 and 25–31. The instability of the text—quite characteristic of Renaissance and convent writing (I am thinking of the *cuadernos de canto*)—as well as the different conception of the "author" are the result of my use of the longer variant. Antonio Prieto has underscored this instability: "The poetry of Saint Teresa, for which no author manuscript survives, is quite likely to have been dictated in some cases: poems recited for her nuns who, in turn, transcribed them, sometimes without stating the author, and then compiled them with other similar poems, a practice that has created problems for verifying authenticity" (Prieto, *La poesía española del siglo XVI,* vol. 2, *Aquel valor que respetó olvido,* 738). Other variants are also commented on in the essay.

2. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle,* 55–56, translation modified. (The Spanish original of this text can be found in Teresa de Jesús, *Obras completas,* 606.)

3. R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self,* 17.

4. It is striking that in some versions of the poem I have come across, for example on the Internet, the "he placed" (*puso*) is changed into "I placed" (*puse*). The change is not simply a gratuitous one, since when "I placed" is written, all the effects of being possessed and of the ventriloquism—indeed, the entire consequence of the presence of the Other inhabiting the self— are lost. That change erases one of the most interesting and important aspects of this poem, for it directly affects the poem's pronounced polyphony.

5. I will not compare the two poems following Helmut Hatzfeld's *Estudios literarios sobre mística española.* It should be remembered that he highly valued the poetic quality of Saint John of the Cross while dismissing Saint Teresa as a mere versifier.

6. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon,* 11.

7. Hélène Cixous, *The Newly Born Woman,* 99.

Renunciation and Absorption: On the Dimensionality of Baroque Asceticism / Burcht Pranger

1. Xavier Bray, ed., *The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture, 1600–1700,* 17.

2. Ibid., 160.

3. Ibid., 160.

4. Ibid., 40.

5. Ibid., 7.

6. Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity;* Virginia Burrus, *The Sex Lives of the Saints: An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography.*

7. That being so, I would like to argue against attempts to derive from this cognitive and visual renunciation a rapprochement of Christianity with other religions, in particular Islam and certain types of Buddhism, that have also been critical of images and in which (visual) asceticism takes pride of place. A point in case is the German theologian, philosopher, and Neoplatonist Meister Eckhart (c. 1260–c. 1327), whose radical program of *Entbildung,* or "de-imaging," has tempted many an interpreter (historians of comparative religion and specialists in mysticism and spirituality) into finding common ground where I think there is none. In my view, in comparing religions one should take the high rather than the low road. In that respect, even Eckhart's most de-imaged (*entbildet*) notion of the divine, his most radical "cognitive" withdrawal into the desert, is still governed by a *visible* presence of sorts where the difference with Zurbarán's *Christ on the Cross* is one of degree rather than kind.

8. John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion,* vol. 4, 17, 25.

9. The *extra Calvinisticum* denotes the fact that "the Word is fully united to but never totally contained within the human nature and, therefore, even in the incarnation is to be conceived of as beyond or outside of (*extra*) the human nature" (Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology,* 111). See also Edward Davis Willis, *Calvin's Catholic Christology: The Function of the So-Called Extra Calvinisticum in Calvin's Theology.*

10. The use of "absorption" in an art-historical sense has been coined by Michael Fried as "the inwardness of a painting." Fried has taken the term from Diderot, who used it in antithesis to theatricality, which he denotes as involving address by the figures in a painting to the beholder. See Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot.* In this article I use "absorption" in a more general sense as the transformation (almost) of one person or image into another, taking the spectator along in the process. As a result, I also use "theatricality" in a slightly less outward sense than Fried. This is not to deny the importance of Fried's notion of "absorption" and "theatricality"—on the contrary. It would be worthwhile to write an essay on my subject matter on the basis of a Friedlike approach. Such an effort should, however, be preceded by a thorough analysis of Fried's "absorption." See note 19.

11. See A. D. Nuttall, *Why Does Tragedy Give Pleasure?*

12. Bernard of Clairvaux, *In ascensione sermo* 2.34, in *Sancti Bernardi Opera,* vol. 5, 128–29.

13. Bray, *The Sacred Made Real,* 80.

14. David Davies, "Shocking the Senses to Stir the Soul," lecture, National Gallery, London, October 23, 2009.

15. See my *The Artificiality of Christianity: Essays on the Poetics of Monasticism,* esp. chap. 15, "Images of Iron: Ignatius of Loyola and Joyce."

16. Bray, *The Sacred Made Real,* 162.

17. In fact, this image of the *amplexus* goes further back to the late twelfth century (Herbert of Clairvaux's *Liber miraculorum*) and, more famously, Conrad of Eberbach's *Exordium magnum* (early thirteenth century). See James France, "The Heritage of Saint Bernard in Medieval Art."

18. Bray, *The Sacred Made Real,* 162.

19. Once more it should be pointed put that I use "theatricality" in an un-Fried-like sense as taking place within the picture/image rather than turning outward. Here we hit upon a problematic aspect in Fried's notion of "absorption" and "theatricality": how to account for theatricality *within* absorption as, for instance, the "absorbed" interaction between Christ and Bernard in Ribalta's painting? The closest Fried comes to discussing this problem is in his analysis of Caravaggio's *Narcissus* absorbed to the point of being immersed in his own image. See Fried, *The Moment of Caravaggio,* 134–39.

20. Precisely this aspect of reciprocity is ignored by art historians such as Xavier Bray and James France. France wonders why it has taken so long for the image of the *amplexus* "to find expressions in art. . . . The theme is pure Bernard, based on his theology centred on Christ's sacrifice on the cross, a corollary of Christ's full participation in our humanity, and a theme which recurs time and again in his work" ("The Heritage," 328). It would be interesting to trace how Bernard's *dynamic* presence and participation in sacred scenes has disappeared from devotional literature while persisting in art.

21. I have discussed Bérulle in more detail in my *The Artificiality of Christianity,* chap. 14, "Baroque Devotion."

22. Pierre de Bérulle, *Grandeurs de Iésus,* discours II, in *Oeuvres Complètes,* 190–91.

23. Ibid., 189–90.

"For the Life Was Manifested" / Kevin Hart

I thank Jean-Yves Lacoste, Paul Mariani, and Henry Weinfield for comments on an earlier version of this essay.

1. All quotations from the Bible are from the King James version.

2. Augustine, "First Homily," in *Homilies on the First Epistle of John,* 22.

3. I leave aside, solely for reasons of economy, the question of the role of the sacraments. Hopkins's poetry is not a sacrament and does not deal with sacraments, although there is no reason not to think of it as sacramental and as dealing with sacramentals. See my essay, "Poetry and Revelation: Hopkins, Counter-Experience and *Reductio.*"

4. See Karl Rahner, "The 'Spiritual Senses' According to Origen," and idem, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages"; Hans Urs von Bal-

thasar, *The Glory of the Lord,* vol. 1, *Seeing the Form,* and vol. 2, *Studies in Theological Style: Clerical Styles,* esp. 317–26. Also see Stephen Fields, "Balthasar and Rahner on the Spiritual Senses."

5. Origen, *Contra Celsum,* 44; Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on the Song of Songs,* 195; John of the Cross, "The Ascent of Mount Carmel," book 2, chap. 4, sect. 2. It should be recalled, though, that elsewhere in the commentary on the canticle, Gregory holds that one encounters God only in the darkness of faith.

6. For Origen, the inner person and the outer person were created separately. See his *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus* 1.13. It should also be remembered that Origen rejected Aristotle's notion of matter as the substrate of all properties, as stated in *Metaphysics* 1.3.1, along with the teaching of the eternity of matter. See *On First Principles* 4.4.7.

7. See Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos and Fragments,* chaps. 12, 13, 30.

8. For Origen, of course, the soul had cooled down from its original warmth when close to God, and so descended to the material world. See Origen, *On First Principles* 2.8.3.

9. See, for example, Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* ¶10.

10. On this theme, see Ronald Bruzina, *Edmund Husserl and Eugen Fink: Beginnings and Ends in Phenomenology 1928–1938,* 6.3.1 and 6.3.2. I leave aside here a narrow discussion of the differences between Husserl and Fink regarding spirit.

11. See Husserl's quotation from Augustine's *De vera religione* at the very end of his *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology.* For Husserl on the soul, and in particular his rejection of the soul as naturalistically conceived, see his *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy,* 63, 116, 118, 170, 214.

12. One influential account of the spiritual senses identifies them strictly with the intellect and excludes the imagination and even the will. See A. Poulain, *The Graces of Interior Prayer,* chap. 6.

13. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book,* 100, 259.

14. See Angela Ales Bello, *The Divine in Husserl and Other Explorations,* part 1, chap. 2.

15. See Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book,* § 58.

16. I follow the later Husserl in distinguishing the *epochē* and the reduction. See *The Crisis of European Sciences,* § 41.

17. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations,* 46.

18. Not only the Christian, of course, though I limit myself here to that religion. It should be noted that atheists also have the supernatural attitude, but only in negative: they deny that there truly *is* such an attitude to be taken seriously. On what I have called the "supernatural attitude" see Husserl's words as recorded by Dorian Cairns in his *Conversations with Husserl and Fink,* 47.

19. See Karl Jaspers, *Philosophical Faith and Revelation.*

20. See on this topic Max Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man,* 268–69.

21. Husserl, *Ideas, Book 1,* 117.

22. Husserl, A V 21, 128a. I quote James G. Hart's translation of the passage in his "A Précis of Husserlian Phenomenological Theology," 148.

23. It is tempting to examine the relations between Husserl's view of God and experience, as expressed here, and Karl Rahner's notion of "transcendental experience." I put this aside for another occasion. I also leave aside the interesting question of whether the divine mode of presence, as entertained by Husserl in this passage, bears any resemblance to Bernard of Clairvaux's understanding of the presence of God that cannot be traced in the mind. See his *On the Song of Songs,* 4, sermon 74. 6.

24. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis,* in *On Genesis,* 12.6.15–7.16.

25. See Bello, *The Divine in Husserl,* part 1, chap. 2, sect. 2.

26. On this issue, see Anthony J. Steinbock, *Phenomenology and Mysticism: The Verticality of Religious Experience,* esp. chaps. 1 and 5.

27. Husserl looks at the matter from the other side: for him, the one who makes the *epochē* is like a religious convert. See *The Crisis of European Sciences,* § 35.

28. Maurice Blondel, "The Letter on Apologetics," in *The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma,* 130.

29. See Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism,* 32. Jüngel's sense of experiencing experience remains within the supernatural attitude, however.

30. Husserl, *Briefwechsel,* vol. 3, 454.

31. Not only Bonaventure but also Karl Barth. See his *Church Dogmatics,* vol. 1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God,* part 2, 470.

32. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences,* 97.

33. See Ignatius of Loyola, "The Spiritual Exercises," in *Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works,* §§ 121–25.

34. George Herbert, "Prayer" (I), in *The Works of George Herbert,* 51.

35. Claude Colleer Abbott, ed., *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges,* 56.

36. Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Poems and Prose,* 31. I have added all Hopkins's accents. All further quotations from Hopkins's poems are from this edition.

37. See Hugh of Saint Victor, "The Soul's Three Ways of Seeing," in *Selected Spiritual Writings,* 183. Also see his *Didascalicon,* 99–100.

38. See Richard of Saint Victor, *The Twelve Patriarchs, The Mystical Ark, Book Three of "The Trinity,"* 71.

39. Ignatius, "The Spiritual Exercises," 148, 149, 150.

40. Christopher Devlin, ed., *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins,* 175.

41. It should not be assumed that Hopkins's commentary on the "Spiritual Exercises" is undertaken exclusively in an Ignatian spirit. His interest in Scotus is clearly legible in his comments. However, I am more interested here in the habit

of contemplation than the Scotist inflection that Hopkins gives to his Ignatian training. See Franco Marucci, *The Fine Delight that Fathers Thought: Rhetoric and Medievalism in Gerard Manley Hopkins,* 188–98.

42. For Saint Ignatius, one contemplates the visible and meditates upon the invisible; in the monastic tradition it is usually the other way round. See David Anthony Downes, *The Ignatian Personality of Gerard Manley Hopkins,* chap. 6. For an account of contemplation as a gaze on the face of God, see Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job* 3:1, 56–57.

43. See Augustine, *De consensus evangelistarum,* I.5.8. The relevant passage reads, "*ista vero magis in fide et apud perpaucos per speculum in enigmate et ex parte in aliqua visione incommutabilis veritatis.*"

44. Richard of Saint Victor, *The Mystical Ark,* book 2, chap.12.

45. Hopkins, *The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins,* vol. 4, *Oxford Essays and Notes,* 307.

46. See, for example, *Carmen* I.iv, II.xiv, and IV.vii.

47. Yet see *Sermons and Devotional Writings,* 136–38, where the "spiritual senses" are directed to consider the fires of hell.

48. On the traces of Ruskin in this poem, see Alison G. Sulloway, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper,* 89.

49. Humphry House, ed., *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins,* 289, and Claude Colleer Abbott, ed., *Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins Including his Correspondence with Coventry Patmore,* 373

50. John Milton, *Paradise Lost,* ed. Alastair Fowler, 8: 257–61.

51. Paul Mariani is right to point us also to the similar rhythm in the opening line of Swinburne's "Hermaphroditus": "Lift úp thy líps, turn róund, look báck for lóve." See Mariani, *A Commentary on the Complete Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins,* 116n55.

52. House, *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins,* 204.

53. For other "phenomenological I's," see Husserl, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology: From the Lectures, Winter Semester, 1910–1911,* § 39; idem, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic,* 52.

54. Husserl, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory (1898–1925),* 606.

55. House, *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins,* 230.

56. Ibid., 205.

57. It should be noted, though, that Husserl allows imagination to fulfill empty intentions: the meaning, not the object, has intuition. See Husserl, "Psychological Studies in the Elements of Logic," in *Early Writings in the Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics,* 150–51, and *Logical Investigations,* vol. 2, 725.

58. Hopkins, *Oxford Essays and Notes,* 313.

59. See Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude,* part 1.

60. See Lynn Staley, trans. and ed., *The Book of Margery Kempe,* 10.

61. Theodosa Gray, trans., *The Homilies of Saint Gregory the Great on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel,* 2.1.18. See also Gregory's similar comment in his *Morals on*

the Book of Job 3.1, 262. Gregory is not alone in this view. See, for example, Ambrose of Milan, *Exposition of the Holy Gospel According to Saint Luke,* 20, 30, and Grégoire Palamas, *Défense des saints hésychastes,* vol. 1, pp. 1, 3, 27.

62. In a different key, one that is almost Stevensian, J. Hillis Miller speaks of a "marriage of spirit and matter" in Hopkins. See his *The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth-Century Writers,* 290.

63. See Devlin, *The Sermons and Devotional Writings,* 151.

64. Henry D. Thoreau, *Journal,* vol. 3, 354–55. The entry was made on August 5, 1851.

65. House, *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins,* 199.

66. Blondel, *Action: Essay on a Critique of Life and a Science of Practice (1893),* 198.

67. See Richard of Saint Victor, *The Mystical Ark,* book 5, chap. 4.

68. Ibid., book 6, chap. 18. In Richard's schema Hopkins the poet would be in the third stage of contemplation, with only three wings, whereas those who make spiritual leaps have six wings.

69. On anticipation, see Jean-Yves Lacoste, "La phénoménalité de l'anticipation," in *La phénoménalité de Dieu: Neuf études,* esp. 150–57.

Augustine, Rosenzweig, and the Possibility of Experiencing Miracle / Virginia Burrus

1. Augustine, *City of God,* 10.2; hereafter cited as *CG.* Quotations in Latin are from the 1965 Corpus Christianorum edition, *De civitate Dei.*

2. Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption,* 118–19; hereafter cited as *SR.* Quotations in German are from the 1954 Verlag Lambert Schneider edition (3rd), *Der Stern der Erlösung.*

3. Francesco Paolo Ciglia, "Auf der Spur Augustins: *Confessiones* und *De civitate Dei* als Quellen des *Stern der Erlösung.*" Ciglia is not the first to remark on the significance of Augustine's *City of God* for Rosenzweig's *Star:* Amos Funkenstein argues that Rosenzweig takes crucial inspiration from Augustine's work "for his dualistic version of a profane history and a sacred non-history" (*Perceptions of Jewish History,* 298).

4. This is Rosenzweig's own description, from a letter of September 2, 1928, to Richard Koch, cited by Ciglia, "Auf der Spur Augustins," 224n2. The fuller text reads: "Nachdem ich 1913 plötzlich zum Philosophen geworden war, . . . fiel mir Ende 1916 der Plan meines 'Lebenswerks' ein. . . . Der Plan ging auf ein Buch de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis, wie der Stern nachher geworden ist, aber in Form eines Biblekommentars. . . . Vor nun zehn Jahren schrieb ich dan plötzlich überstürzteraber, wie sich erst später herausgestellt hat, glücklicherweise den Kommentar unter Weglassung des Texts" (Letter 526 in Franz Rosenzweig, *Briefe,* 618–20).

5. Elliot R. Wolfson, "Introduction to Barbara Galli's Translation of Rosenzweig's *Star,*" in *The Star of Redemption,* xvii.

6. Ciglia comments, "Man kann mit einigem Recht sagen, dass Rosenzweig in Augustin nie nur eine Gestalt aus längst vergangenen Tagen, sondern immer auch einen lebendigen Gesprächspartner gesehen hat, von dem man Anregungen und Denkanstösse erhhalten kann" ("Auf der Spur Augustins," 225). In the face of the paucity of explicit references to Augustine in *Star,* Ciglia uses the evidence of Rosenzweig's journals (later published as *Paralipomena*) and his letters to demonstrate that Rosenzweig was immersed in Augustine's texts starting around 1916.

7. Cited by Cigla, "Auf der Spur Augustins," 228–29). The quotation is from Rosenzweig's *Paralipomena,* and Rosenzweig's reference is to *Confessions* 12.24.

8. This point is particularly well made with regard to Augustine by M. B. Pranger, "The Unfathomability of Sincerity: On the Seriousness of Augustine's *Confessions.*" With regard to Rosenzweig, Wolfson's comments are incisive: "The interpretative act—which bespeaks the essential nature of speech-thinking, the dialogical comportment unique to the human being, in its inscripted and oral forms—affords one an opportunity to experience time, and, more specifically, the moment, which encapsulates time in its most elemental cadence, as novel repetition" ("Introduction," xix). Rosenzweig's moves to distance himself from Augustine on this and related points deserve further consideration, as we shall see.

9. Rosenzweig does not, of course, use the term "postmodern," but he positions his theory of miracle as initiating a new era of thought, following upon the third "Enlightenment" represented by nineteenth-century historicism.

10. Norbert Samuelson makes the case for Halevi as a source, simultaneously dismissing the possibility of any significant Augustinian influence: "those of us who are familiar with the writings of the Church fathers will recognize at best some slight similarities between Rosenzweig's account of miracles and the still crude conceptual appeals to miracles by the Church fathers. There is no question that Rosenzweig in fact has the theology of the Church fathers in mind as his model for appeal to miracles in theological debate. But at the state that Christian philosophy had reached at the time of these spiritual giants, the concept of miracle was not what Rosenzweig said it was" ("Halevi and Rosenzweig on Miracles," 161). Samuelson's appeal to "progress" contrasts with Rosenzweig's presentation of himself as retrieving an ancient insight that is appealing precisely because it evades modern historicism's commitment to a narrative of progress. More to the point, Samuelson does not succeed in demonstrating that Halevi's theory of miracles explains all that is in Rosenzweig's, or that Augustine's explains none of it. As Ciglia argues in "Auf der Spur Augustins," the influence of *City of God* 10, 21, and 22 is easily identifiable, for they are texts on which Rosenzweig commented in his journals.

11. Paula Fredriksen argues for the relatively benign character of Augustine's supersessionism: "By . . . embedding Jewish legal observance in history, Augustine in effect demythologized, and so secularized, its implications: carnal praxis was not a huge and enduringly indictable moral failing, but divinely mandated ac-

tion appropriate to those earlier times. Further, by understanding this practice as incarnate prophetic enactment, Augustine domesticated it for Catholic doctrine, relating ancient Jewish observances to current Christian beliefs by way of conformation rather than contrast" ("*Secundum Carnem:* History and Israel in the Theology of St. Augustine," 29). Famously, Rosenzweig very nearly embodied such a supersessionism, determining to become a (practicing) Jew so as subsequently to become a proper Christian, as he recounted to his cousin Rudolph Ehrenberg in a letter of October 31, 1913: "I declared I could turn Christian only *qua* Jew." Equally famously, he shifted his decision, so that the path to Christianity ultimately led him back to Judaism: "It no longer seems necessary to me, and therefore, being what I am, no longer possible. I will remain a Jew" (Letter 59 in Rosenzweig, *Briefe,* 71–72, translated by Nahum Glatzer in *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought,* 25, 28). In a letter to his mother written October 23, 1913, soon after his "conversion," Rosenzweig mentions both Tertullian and Augustine in the context of a scathing (and very witty) denunciation of Christian supersessionism (Letter 57 in Rosenzweig, *Briefe,* 66).

12. Following the lead of Henri Marrou, Robert Grant pronounces Augustine lamentably credulous, marveling at the church father's ability to marvel. The cause of such surprising naïveté, Grant suggests, lies not only with Augustine's literal reading of scripture but also with "the fact that natural science was moribund" in his day. Indeed, Augustine's strong emphasis on the significance of the miraculous in his later works may be seen to have hastened the demise "of ancient science and indeed of ancient civilization," Grant concludes with a flourish (*Miracle and Natural Law in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Thought,* 216–20). Whereas Grant worries that Augustine has equated the natural with the miraculous, rendering nature merely inscrutable, John Mourant argues that Augustine increasingly dissociates miracle from nature, abandoning his theory of "seminal reasons" and coupling his long-standing emphasis on the subjective aspect of miracle with a sharper differentiation between "natural and religious miracles." "Religious miracles receive an objective validity through Scriptural revelation," notes Mourant, adding that they are distinct from natural wonders in their manifestation of divine purposefulness. He admits that Augustine may seem unduly credulous with regard to miracles reported in his own day but urges that his apparent credulity needs to be placed in context, above all the context of Augustine's own experience of "the miracle of the grace of conversion." Still, even Mourant seems to squirm a bit, noting that Augustine's "will to believe leads almost to an exaggerated credibility in the testimony of others" ("Augustine on Miracles," 122–27). Rowan Greer places Augustine's view of miracle as the culmination of a shift within Christianity away from a Platonizing cultivation of individual virtue and toward a corporate piety geared to accessing sources of divine power: for the mature Augustine, "God's will is all that remains, and it is difficult to see that 'nature' remains in any sense a meaningful concept"; echoing Grant, Greer notes, "No longer are miracles natural; nature is itself miraculous" (*The Fear of Freedom: A Study of Miracles in the Roman Imperial Church,* 176).

13. Greer, *The Fear of Freedom,* 177.

14. See especially his essay of that name: Franz Rosenzweig, *The New Thinking* (German edition: Franz Rosenzweig, *Kleinere Schriften*), 373–98.

15. Mark Vessey, "Introduction," in *History, Apocalypse, and the Secular Imagination: New Essays on Augustine's City of God,* 8.

16. See notes 4 and 7 above.

17. While serving in the military in March 1916, Rosenzweig wrote to his parents from a train on the way to the front, requesting a copy of the first of a two-volume set: "Bestellen bitte Augustin 'De civitate Dei' in Teubner *un*begunden, und zwar nur das erste Bändchen (es sind zwei), kostet vier oder fünf Mark." Two days later, he wrote to remind them again, apparently impatient that the little volume had not yet arrived: "den Augustin könnt ihr schicken" (Letters 72, 73 in Rosenzweig, *Briefe,* 93–94). The Teubner (issued in a third edition in 1908) contains books 1–13, thus conforming to neither of Augustine's own divisions!

18. Letter to Firmus, cited in the introduction to the Penguin edition of Augustine, *City of God,* xxxvi.

19. Rosenzweig, *The New Thinking,* 86.

20. As Rosenzweig writes in *The New Thinking,* 92–93: "But so the miracle remains that there is yet something that has form, and something that does not pass away. To be sure, not in the real world of the ever renewed life, where only the present is present, and the past only past, and the future only coming. But of these three, time in the most temporal sense is only the present [*ist ja Zeit im zeitlichsten Sinn nur die Gegenwart*]. And as the forms of paganism project into the present, like a bygone creation, so too is the coming redemption anticipated in eternal forms. . . . The third volume [of *Star*] deals with these."

21. Rosenzweig, *The New Thinking,* 82.

22. The preference for the lesser miracle is perhaps most famously articulated by David Hume in his 1748 *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding;* insofar as the lesser "miracle" is almost inevitably the falsehood of the testimony of even a reliable witness, the position virtually eliminates the possibility that actual miracles take place. See the selection from Hume in Richard Swinburne, ed., *Miracles,* 23–40, as well as the several essays by contemporary philosophers engaging Hume's thought.

23. Elliot R. Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination,* 372.

24. The discussion of love is only hinted at in the introduction to part 2, owing to its structural positioning; it seems significant, however, that it cannot quite be left out. As Eric Santner puts it, with regard to Rosenzweig's theory of miracle, "We might say that all Rosenzweig wanted to show was that truly inhabiting the midst of life . . . was actually a remarkable, even a miraculous achievement that required some form of divine support—ultimately a form of *love*—kept alive, in time, by a certain form of life" ("Miracles Happen: Benjamin, Rosenzweig, Freud, and the Matter of the Neighbor," 133).

25. Santner, "Miracles Happen," 82.

26. As noted, Robert Grant charges Augustine with dangerous disregard for the difference between miracle and created nature, thus between myth and science: "Augustine's view is not so much that miracles are natural as that nature is miraculous. To view nature from this point of view is to abandon any attempt to explain its workings" (*Miracle and Natural Law,* 217). John Mourant agrees that Augustine often claims to find all of nature subjectively wondrous and that he does not understand the miraculous as outside or in opposition to nature. However, Augustine does, according to Mourant, make objective distinctions between the miraculous and the ordinary within nature and also, especially in his later work, between natural and supernatural "religious" miracles; "religious" miracles are distinguished by their scriptural validation and manifest providential purpose ("Augustine on Miracles," 105, 122).

27. James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue,* xi–xii. To be fair, Rosenzweig himself may be seen to generate considerable ambiguity with regard to the relation of miracle to creation (or indeed, the possible conflation thereof); see the discussion of Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Rosenzweig's Concept of Miracle," 62–66.

28. Francesco Paolo Ciglia, "Der Gordische Knoten der Zeit: Aspecte des Dialogs Zweischen Rosenzweig und Augustin," 323–45. See also the brief remarks on the resonance of Augustine's and Rosenzweig's theories of time (without reference to Rosenzweig's as a reader of Augustine) by Steven Kepnes, "Rosenzweig's Liturgical Reasoning as a Response to Augustine's Temporal Aporias."

29. From the *Paralipomena,* cited by Ciglia, "Der Gordische Knoten der Zeit," 330n9.

30. The *Star* also disavows its Augustinian fundaments, however. There Rosenzweig ultimately aligns Christianity with historical-political agency, contrasted with Judaism's uprootedness from history and politics: "Our life is no longer interwoven with anything external, we have taken root in ourselves, without roots in the earth, eternal wanderers therefore, yet deeply rooted in ourselves, in our own body and blood. And this rooting in ourselves and only in ourselves guarantees our eternity for us" (*SR,* 324). He explicitly associates Augustine with the (in his view, distinctly Christian) conflation of worldly politics and divine providence: "Augustine . . . now explains: for the Church . . . discord between one's own welfare and the faith that is loyal to one that is higher could not arise; for it 'salus' and 'fides' are united" (*SR,* 349). Despite Rosenzweig's strong and precise distancing of his own Jewish perspective from Augustine's Christian one with regard to eternal versus historical life, the very distinction owes much to Augustine, as Amos Funkenstein (*Perceptions of Jewish History,* 298–301) has argued: like Augustine, Rosenzweig posits a "parallel but disjoint" history of divine and earthly peoples in which the citizens of "the city of God" are dispersed as wanderers and aliens among the citizens of the world, having no real stake in the fortunes of political states but rather being rooted in a heavenly or eternal society. To put it simply, what Augustine claims for Christians, Rosenzweig claims for Jews. Too simply, perhaps, for at the same time that he appropriates an Augustinian *contemptus mundi,* Rosenzweig also appropriates and transvalues the "car-

nality" that Augustine assigns to the Jews, as Funkenstein further observes; this becomes for Rosenzweig the Jewish rootedness "in our own body and blood" (*SR,* 324).

31. James Wetzel, "Snares of Truth: Augustine on Free Will and Predestination," 136.

32. Wetzel, "Snares of Truth," 138.

33. Thomas A. Smith, "The Pleasure of Hell in *City of God* 21," 201.

34. Smith, "The Pleasure of Hell," 204.

35. Indeed, the reality of hell may be graspable only from the imagined perspective of *absolute* hindsight, a provisionally posited God's-eye view—posited merely provisionally, because hell cannot actually be posited, nor can God easily be interjected into a discussion of hell (except by falling back into voyeurism or vengeance, as Augustine occasionally does).

36. I first learned of the deep-sea, hot-water worms from the February 10, 2009, interview with Robert Ballard on the television program *The Colbert Report.* These worms are also featured, interestingly (given parallels of literary genre), on the website Science Frontiers: The Unusual & Unexplained (www.sciencefrontiers.com).

37. Elliot R. Wolfson, "Light Does Not Talk But Shines: Apophasis and Vision in Rosenzweig's Theopoetic Temporality."

38. Paradoxically, perhaps, as a literary performance Augustine's version of eternity is arguably the more intensely "carnal" and temporalized, if also (thereby?) more in danger of slipping out of the performative present and into an eternally deferred futurity—a danger of which Rosenzweig is sharply aware. See his critical comments on "the Christian chronology": "Not as moment therefore does the moment become the representative of eternity for the Christian, but as central point of Christian world time; and this world time, since it does not elapse but stands, consists of nothing but such 'central points'; every event stands in the center between beginning and end of the eternal way and through this central position in the temporal interval kingdom [*im zeitlichen Zwischenreich*] of eternity, is itself eternal" (*SR,* 360).

39. As Wolfson argues, with regard to Rosenzweig, in "Light Does Not Talk But Shines."

40. Funkenstein identifies the difference between Rosenzweig and Augustine thus: "Rosenzweig has no need for heaven and angels. His City of God is here on earth, already eternal in that it will be ever present" (*Perceptions of Jewish History,* 299). On one level, this is not just a fair but an extremely important distinction. On another level, it doesn't quite hold: first, the significance of Augustine's "need for heaven and angels" is less transparent than it might initially seem (correspondingly, his concept of "eternity" is more subtle than it is often taken to be, with respect to "heaven and angels"); second, Rosenzweig's own resolution of the tension between parts 2 and 3 of *Star*—between presence and eternity—is less clear than it might be. (And if the resolution is a dissolution, where does that leave his insistence on triadic irreducibility? This is the challenge issued by Wolfson in

"Light Does Not Talk But Shines"). I am suggesting there is a shared ambivalence, though one that tugs from different directions.

41. I am drawn to (without being able fully to comprehend) the critique of "objectivation" put forth by quantum physicist Erwin Schrödinger and both cited and further explicated by Shimon Malin, who notes, "we are so used to mistaking the abstract for the concrete that the fundamental fact of experiencing is excluded from scientific analysis" ("Whitehead and the Collapse of Quantum States," 79).

42. Greer, *The Fear of Freedom,* 175.

43. Karmen MacKendrick, *Word Made Skin: Figuring Language at the Surface of Flesh,* 155. The context is a discussion of scars, not miracles.

44. Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being,* xvii.

45. Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History,* 304.

46. See Rosenzweig's comment with regard to his pre-"conversion" perspective: "I thought I had Christianized my view of Judaism, but in actual fact I had done the opposite: I had 'Judaized' my view of Christianity. I had considered the year 313 as the beginning of a falling away from true Christianity" (Letter 59 in Rosenzweig, *Briefe,* 72, trans. Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig,* 24). For Rosenzweig, a "Judaized" Christianity is one robbed of its rightful secularism, yet his very appropriation of Augustine's own thought for his construction of the Jews as the eternal people versus the "worldly" Christians (see Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History,* 298–301) should complicate, if not challenge, this dualism.

"Come forth into the light of things": Material Spirit as Negative Ecopoetics / Kate Rigby

1. A critical historiography of the symbolism of light has been undertaken by Geoffrey Berry in the context of his doctoral research in the Centre for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies at Monash University ("Under the Dominion of Light: An Ecocritical Mythography"). I am indebted to him for alerting me to the ecophilosophical ramifications of this trope. See also Berry, "Maneuvering Light: Utopian Urbanity and Its Ecological Cost."

2. Kate Rigby, "Earth, World, Text: On the (Im)possibility of Ecopoiesis."

3. Bertholt Brecht, "An die Nachgebornen," in *Gesammelte Werke.* Unless otherwise indicated all translations from German are my own.

4. The title of Michael Bennett's valuable plaidoyer for a more urban-oriented ecocriticism, focusing on issues of social justice, "From Wide Open Spaces to Metropolitan Places: The Urban Challenge to Ecocriticism," tends in this direction. It should be noted, however, that he ends his article by calling for an ecocritical linking of "deep" and "social ecology" rather than an outright suppression of the former in favor of the latter. On this question, see also my "Ecocriticism."

5. Val Plumwood, "Shadow Places and the Politics of Dwelling."

6. Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans, and Rachel Stein, eds., *The Environmental Justice Reader.*

7. Hans Magnus Enzensberger. "Weiterung," in *Die Gedichte,* 204.

8. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Zwei Fehler," in *Die Gedichte,* 206.

9. Recalling Marx's observation in *The Holy Family* that the private property relation "alienates not only the individuality of human beings but also that of things," Bloch argues in *The Principle of Hope* that under capitalism, nature appears exclusively in the mode of *natura dominata,* being valued solely in instrumental terms as a means to an end, subject to human control and exploitation. Reviving the concept of nature as productive process rather than static mechanism, as posited in the *Naturphilosophie* of Hegel and above all Schelling, Bloch holds to the hope that the emancipatory transformation of human relations would also restore nature to the status of *natura naturans,* a subject in its own right. Thus recognizing the independent agency and coproductivity of nature, he suggests, necessitates the development of new forms of technology, based on the principle of alliance rather than domination. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope,* vol. 2, 690–91.

10. Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City,* 271.

11. Theodor Adorno, *Prisms,* 34.

12. Elaine Martin, "Re-reading Adorno: The 'After Auschwitz' Aporia," 11.

13. George Steiner, *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman,* ix.

14. Val Plumwood, "Nature as Agency and the Prospects for a Progressive Naturalism."

15. See my "Writing in the Anthropocene: Idle Chatter or Ecoprophetic Witness?"

16. For example, Scott Slovic, *Seeking Awareness in American Nature Writing,* and Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture.*

17. Lance Newman, *Our Common Dwelling: Henry Thoreau, Transcendentalism and the Class Politics of Nature.* See also Mark Cladis's excellent discussion of religion, ecology, and democracy with respect to the contemporary nature writers Annie Dillard, Barry Lopez, and Terry Tempest Williams in "Stone-Throwers with Excellent Aim: Waking up to an Environmental Democratic Vision."

18. The most trenchant critique of ecocritical and ecopoetic mimeticism from a poststructuralist perspective to date is Morton's *Ecology Without Nature,* but the restrictiveness of privileging nonfiction nature writing was also targeted previously by Dominic Head ("The (Im)possibility of Ecocriticism"), and the preference for realism roundly rejected by Dana Phillips (*The Truth of Ecology: Nature, Culture and Literature in America*).

19. For example, William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature.*

20. See my "Writing after Nature."

21. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory,* 108.

22. Ibid., 97.

23. Mary Oliver, *Blue Iris: Poems and Essays,* 53.

24. Oliver, "The Sunflowers," in *Blue Iris,* 2.

25. Yves Bonnefoy, "Lifting Our Eyes from the Page."

26. Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism,* 33.

27. The uncovering of its materialist moiety has been a primary concern of ecocritical Romanticism studies (as reviewed in, for example, Kevin Hutchings, "Ecocriticism in British Romanticism Studies") and is centralized in Onno Oerlemans, *Romanticism and the Materiality of Nature.*

28. William Wordsworth, "The Tables Turned," in *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797–1800,* 108–9.

29. Adam Potkay, "Wordsworth and the Ethics of Things."

30. Blackston cited in Potkay, "Wordsworth and the Ethics of Things," 394.

31. Potkay, "Wordsworth and the Ethics of Things," 395.

32. Ibid., 392.

33. Sylvia Benso, *The Face of Things: A Different Side of Ethics,* xxxii.

34. Ibid., xxix–xxx.

35. Potkay, "Wordsworth and the Ethics of Things," 396 (the original source of the quotation is Sylvia Benso, *The Face of Things,* xxxi).

36. Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith: The Change of Heart That Leads to a New Way of Living on Earth,* 58–60.

37. In my earlier work I have interpreted the religious orientation of Wordsworth's early verse as closer to panentheism (and hence to physic-theology, Neoplatonism, and German *Naturphilosophie*) than to Spinozan "pantheism" (see my *Topographies of the Sacred,* 47–48). However, recent research by Marjorie Levinson ("A Motion and a Spirit: Romancing Spinoza") indicates that the significance of Spinoza for Wordsworth and other English Romantic era poets was probably greater and more direct than has hitherto been recognized.

38. Freya Mathews, *For Love of Matter: A Contemporary Panpsychism,* 351. See also Bill Brown, "Thing Theory."

39. Mathews, *For Love of Matter,* and idem, *Reinhabiting Reality: Towards a Recovery of Culture.*

40. See also Stacey Alaimo and Susan Hekman, *Material Feminisms;* Jane Bennett, "The Force of Things: Steps Toward an Ecology of Matter"; and Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds., *New Materialisms.* This new materialist turn is also entering ecocriticism, notably through the work of Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann ("Material Ecocriticism: Materiality, Agency, and Models of Narrativity"), who are currently editing a volume for Indiana University Press on material ecocriticism.

41. Benso, *The Face of Things,* 150.

42. Ibid., 147.

43. Ibid., 150.

44. Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness,* 159. It might be noted that "luminosity" is a key term for another recent work of theologically inclined phenomenology, as in David Walsh's *Modern Philosophical Revolution: The Luminosity of Existence,* which nonetheless oddly declines conversation with Marion.

45. Wordsworth, "Nutting," in *Lyrical Ballads,* 218–20.

46. Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith,* 110.

47. The question of the materiality of the text is addressed along ecocritical lines, and with reference to the text of the Bible in particular, by Anne Elvey in *The Matter of the Text: Material Engagements between Luke and the Five Senses.*

48. James Phillips, "Wordsworth and the Fraternity of Joy."

49. William Wordsworth, *Poems, In Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800–1807,* 207.

50. Alison Calder, introduction to *Desire Never Leaves: The Poetry of Tim Lilburn,* ix. Hugh Dunkerley also discusses Lilburn's ecopoetics of the *via negativa* in his "Poetry and Unknowing."

51. Tim Lilburn, *Living in the World As If It Were Home,* 22.

52. Lilburn, "In the Hills, Watching," in *Living in the World As If It Were Home,* 18.

53. Lilburn, "There Is No Presence," in *Desire Never Leaves,* 25.

54. Lilburn, *Living in the World As If It Were Home,* 35.

55. Ibid., 18.

56. Ibid., 61.

57. Ibid., 21.

58. Lilburn, "There Is No Presence," in *Desire Never Leaves,* 27.

59. Lilburn, "Pumpkins," in *Desire Never Leaves,* 5.

60. For an excellent introduction to biosemiotics oriented towards ecocritical studies, see W. Wheeler, *The Whole Creature: Complexity, Biosemiotics and the Evolution of Culture.*

61. Cited in Mark Tredinnick, *The Land's Wild Music: Encounters with Barry Lopez, Peter Matthiessen, Terry Tempest Williams and James Galvin,* 211.

62. See my article "Writing in the Anthropocene: Idle Chatter or Ecoprophetic Witness?"

63. John Clare, "The Mores," in *Selected Poems,* 89–91.

The Angel and the Storm: "Material Spirit" in the Era of Climate Change / Tom Cohen

1. Bruno Latour, "An Attempt at a 'Compositional Manifesto,'" 485–86.

2. Robert S. Lehman, "Allegories of Rending: Killing Time with Walter Benjamin," 247.

3. Beatrice Hansen, *Walter Benjamin's Other History: Of Stones, Animals, Human Beings, and Angels.*

4. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations,* 257–58. Subsequent page references to this work appear in the text.

5. This angel has an affinity not to divinity but to "natural history," in Benjamin's vocabulary, which again is neither natural nor historial as such. "Natural history" is elicited, rather, as an *interruption* of artefacted times before different temporal metrics oblivious to human time.

6. Benjamin's "natural history" situates a *so-called* materiality of the earth's chance eons at a non-site braided with alloarchival and trace events. It cannot be anthropomorphized at all, as its metrics alone assures (neither turned into Gaia, a nurturing mother, or more interestingly in Peter Ward's counterstrike, Medea, a destroying mother—both still human metaphors and *maternal* myths, the first tirelessly "organic"). Only here the caesura arrives *as if* from without, depersonified. It impinges on political imaginaries and economic regimes, social contracts, and so on, as it stands to override their parentheses. This opens a reading of "nature" as a parallel and interwoven scene of mnemonic process and proto-mimetic atelic "evolutionary" wars penetrating chemical and molecular zones and interfaced with human *animation.* And it is not because "nature" envelops all, but because proactive and mimetic technicities permeate the living and inorganic systems—of which human language (which Benjamin considers nonhuman) is a special mnemonic instance, with its limiting compulsion to repeat, create imaginary reserves, hypostasize passing effects as stable signifiers, group icons, package anteriorities, and so on. It brings a question of *inscriptions* again to the fore, only balanced against irreversible terrestrial or ecographic processes in backloops removed from zombied perceptual and semantic programs.

7. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International,* 58. Subsequent page references to this work appear in the text.

8. One should not give Benjamin all the credit for his fable since it is itself a reading of Klee's graphic figure—the sensuous-mouthed if childish wire-form of some skinny Terminator *avant la lettre,* stripped of fleshy cover.

9. What we call *archive* names the mnemonic networks of anteriority as such and the inscriptions from which presents are generated. Yet it is active, can mutate, erase its programs, veer into temporal accelerations, self-cancelling loops, fevered ills, time bubbles. It may even flip its perpetual focus on anteriority, as it does today, when calculable "futures" saturate a present in advance. Some of these represent cancelled or consumed "futures," predicted extinction events and population culling. In such instances the desire for preemption arises, which seems to accelerate the effect it wished to deter. This logic of temporal control of disastrous futures is parodied in the Bush doctrine. One cannot stop discussing, trying to preempt, forestall, or derealize certain *things*—the material consequences of the hypercarbon era. But the prospect of bursting our "time bubble" opens a series of questions. And there is no angel of history here.

10. Nothing in the trope of a "democracy to come" that is spectral, nothing in its literalizations, accords with the likely "futures" unfolding today. The era of democracy appears closing, its closure rehearsed by the Bush kleptomediacratic state. "Deconstruction," if it (still) exists, took its compass point from a nonanthropic *trace.* The geomorphic *caesura* for humans may appear instantaneous (like the nuclear blast or the meteor strike) or stretch the figure of the interval to encompass a nonhuman duration, like the mere hundred years to coastal inundation. It may be today, with our addiction to and banalization of "shock," cinematic and

otherwise, what is suppressed is any metrics for the event that arrives in differing durations.

11. The big bang, the nuclear blast, the comet impact that extincts dinosaurs, the terrorist strike or blow, revolution, the trauma as anteriority—all hypostasize the counter-instant as the perceptual marker to negotiate around.

12. Again and again, today, a critical border in contemporary criticism seems gestured to and then folded back into a humanistic structure. One could apply this to the recent deployments of "biopolitics" triggered by Agamben: in *Homo Sacer,* however, Agamben's recirculation of Foucault's term turns on a humanistic and eurocentric circuit—the excavation of a minor Roman law as a preoriginary inscription, the European blind of viewing the Holocaust as a unique and penultimate case (as it would not be to Asia or even Russia), the reduction of the "biopolitical" to a human-upon-human practice still (the *Homo sacer*). Each still operates to guard an anthropic, and here eurocentric, circuit that the figure itself would exceed. One could say the same of the fascination with the "state of exception" and sovereignty, which presumes the suspension of a (democratic) bureaucratic managerial contract in the name of preserving the *people.*

13. A "materiality of inscription" is de Man's proleptic term for what Derrida, in his very different mode, will conjure as the non-site of *khora.* As sheer anteriority and as technic, such accords perhaps less with the stone face than with the atomized grain of sand or mud. De Man, who seemed to veer repeatedly into the site of the speaking dead (that redounds to the reader), or the precession of face in prosopopoeia—and, hence, the side of inscription—seemed drawn across this screen. Nanological, to disinscribe a perceptual regime suggests not the violent exposure of another truth or any possible erasure (short of a totalitarian burning of archives and eradication of populations) but the precession of the preoriginary status of the inscription or its technological base—a precession, say, of word by the letter, alphabeticism by trace. The movement, as Benjamin understood, is structurally suicidal, since its success would imply the erasure of its own "present" as a structure (or the past that defined it). It could also be called suicidal in structure in that it expends itself on arriving at the "irreversible" border of a mutation, a permanent exodus, that can only be affirmed from another, at the other side, at which point his labor is erased. This is the non-site that the materialistic historiographer would awaken to with his shocks, blasting, and allochronic gambles. But in Benjamin's "Theses," one could say, he is indiscreetly pulled away.

14. It is interesting to reflect on how premier critical styles entering the twenty-first century strangely accompanied, with no interventionist power, the entry into the Bush regime's auto-da-fé. It is the more fascinating to consider the current disorientation before a dawning of "climate change," which has rearranged through force imaginary contracts with time (or time-space)—that is, with the latter's unequivocal rupture of the representational membrane as if from without.

15. From such a perspective, the rhetorical premises of ecocriticism, of environmentalism, of green politics as such (sustainability, mitigation, essentially maintenance regimes) are variations on the angelicism that accelerates the expo-

nential curve of autodispossession. Ecological thought tends to return to the same organicist models as would be implicated in hyperconsumption itself, and the maintenance of the *oikos.*

16. Carrying over his analytic of the temporal nonpresent into a critique of Francis Fukuyama's "end of history" allowed him to miss a looming out-of-jointness of fantastic proportion that would, if anything, represent more of a blow to anthropomorphism than deconstruction and Marx combined. That would have been the geomorphic irruptions we call climate change. Its temporal ruptures are multiple, and multiply embedded in innumerable systems. It is extended to a rupture of human temporalities altogether, with the proliferation of other geomorphic time-lines ("global warming," mass extinctions, dying seas, resource depletion, biodiversity collapse).

17. The "materiality of inscription," if one cared for this term, involves no tangible materiality, since it precedes phenomenality and represents the fusion of mnemonics and the orders of world, perception, and act that emerge and occur—no more, that is, than an *inscription* accords with a thing, an object, *hylē,* and so on, outright. What it pretends to name, out of the draft of anteriority, penetrates the interpretation of perception and the generation of value, fetish, and so on, at the crease of where "spirit" and "matter" form a band, or ribbon, in the faux moebius fashion named (by contrast, the materialism of the Marxian model, cast by the opposition of labor and capital, maintains a mind-matter or body-spirit dichotomy even as "materiality" embraces an abstract domain). An inscription would never be manifest as such but rather dispersed amid the symptomatics of decision, perceptual memory, hermeneutics, rhetorical machines.

18. An example would be the insistence, readily literalized, of the injunction against "futures" so as to keep such properly open—even, that is, when the monstrous future is incalculable and turns against that move itself, as today, when the absence of address of climate change in Derrida disappoints and appears "damaging" (Timothy Clark).

19. He is a dissimulating "angel," which is to say costumed. This is already apparent in Klee's painting, where the wired image emits the torsion of a broken if sensuous demonic doll, a sort of antimetaphysical Chuckie.

The Material Working of Spirit / J. Hillis Miller

1. C. P. Cavafy, "It Must Have Been the Spirits."

2. Claire Colebrook, "Matter Without Bodies," 15.

3. Jacques Derrida, "Psyche: Invention of the Other," 1; *Psyché: Inventions de l'autre,* 11.

4. Ibid.

5. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words.*

6. Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: L'état de la dette, le travail du deuil, et la nouvelle Internationale* (1993); *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (1994).

7. Derrida, "Psyche: Invention of the Other," 1; *Psyché: Inventions de l'autre,* 11.

8. Jean-Luc Nancy, *La Déclosion: Déconstruction du Christianisme,* 125; *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity,* 81.

9. Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure,* 81–82, trans. modified.

10. Ibid., 82.

11. See the first three lines of "Ribh denounces Patrick":

An abstract Greek absurdity has crazed the man,
A Trinity that is wholly masculine. Man, woman, child (daughter or son),
That's how all natural or supernatural stories run.
William Butler Yeats, *The Poems: A New Edition,* 284

12. Nancy, *La Déclosion,* 125; *Dis-Enclosure,* 81.

13. G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts,* 199.

14. Martin Heidegger, "Anaximander's Saying," 265; "Der Spruch des Anaximander," 325. (All the Greek words are in Greek letters in Heidegger's essay.)

15. Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Poems,* 105–6.

16. Hopkins, "The Wreck of the Deutschland," in *Poems,* 59.

17. Ibid., 61.

18. For two out of many definitions of "God-terms" in Burke's work, see Burke, *A Grammar of Motives,* 74–77; idem, *A Rhetoric of Motives,* 110–14. In the former passage, Burke defines "God-terms" as "names for the ultimates of motivation." In the latter passage "honor" is given as an example of a possible God-term within a certain sociolinguistic system.

19. De Man is citing and translating Rousseau, *Oeuvres Complètes.*

20. Paul de Man, "Textual Allegories," 134.

21. Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone," 87; "Foi et savoir: Les deux sources de la 'religion' aux limites de la simple raison," 68–69.

22. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecotechnology (accessed June 22, 2011).

23. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus,* 78; *Corpus* (English translation), 89.

24. For the *sídhe,* see the Wikipedia entry "Aos Sí" at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sídhe#The_s.C3.ADdhe:_abodes_of_the_aes_s.C3.ADdhe (accessed June 22, 2011).

25. For a learned and provocative exploration of what might be called a pantechnology, with an emphasis on sign systems, see Louis Armand, *Literate Technologies: Language, Cognition, Technicity.*

26. Henri Bergson, *Oeuvres,* 1245, my translation.

27. For example, Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge," 87; "Foi et savoir," 68–69.

28. Paul de Man, *The Resistance to Theory,* 11.

29. Ibid., 88.

30. Ibid., 11.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Derrida, *Specters of Marx,* 144; *Spectres de Marx,* 229. Subsequent page references to this work are provided parenthetically in the text; page numbers of the French version follow in brackets.

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